

THE FIGHT FOR CHARACTER

And Other Chapel Talks

By
JOHN W. DUNNING
*Minister of First Presbyterian Church
Kalamazoo, Michigan*



NEW YORK
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON AND EDINBURGH



Copyright, MCMXXXVII, by
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

All rights reserved: no part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission from the Publisher, except by a reviewer desiring to quote brief passages for inclusion in a notice to be inserted in a newspaper or periodical.

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
London: 21 Paternoster Square

*TO
ANNA
AND
CATHERINE*

FOREWORD

HAVING preached to a congregation made up largely of college students, college graduates, college professors, for the past twenty-two years, I am moved to bring forth this volume of addresses, selected from those which have had the college group in mind during preparation. Several have been evoked by campus occasions, and others given in the course of the regular ministry of the church. They are "occasional" addresses and have come out of recent months.

The church of which I am pastor ministers to many hundreds of the two thousand college students in our city every year. I record the inspiration of their presence, their honesty, their earnestness, their hunger for truth, their spiritual sincerity. For almost a quarter of a century I have watched their pageant, passing from the campus to places of usefulness at the four corners of the earth. They are a splendid company of the sons of God.

In the difficult readjustments coming with college days, they profess to have found messages such as these helpful in their religious and spiritual living. What has been helpful to them, I find, ministers most deeply to the rest of the congregation.

These messages are not theological nor ecclesiastical. They aim to bring forth a personal, social and practical interpretation of the religion of Jesus, understandable to the youth, and applicable to the situations of the life of today.

They are based on the assumption that, far from being outmoded, the religion of Jesus still is the needed groundwork of all life. Jesus still is out ahead of us, for all our progress. Some day a generation of oncoming young men and women will catch up with Him, and the Age of Gold will come. Is it too much to believe that such a generation is in our colleges today?

I wish to thank authors and publishers for permission to quote from their writings, which are acknowledged in the footnotes.

J. W. D.

*First Presbyterian Church
Kalamazoo, Michigan*

CONTENTS

I. THE FIGHT FOR CHARACTER	11
II. IMAGINATION AND RELIGION	22
III. DIVINE RESTORATIVES	37
IV. UTILIZING THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE	48
V. EMPTY THRONES	60
VI. ATTITUDES OF THE EDUCATED	75
VII. THE KINGDOM TARRIES	89
VIII. RELIGION IS A FIRE!	105
IX. THE FALSE GOAL OF SECURITY	115
X. THE TRAGEDY OF DISUSE	128
XI. THE IMPERIAL ATOM	140
XII. THE RELEASE OF SPLENDOUR	152
XIII. THE REDEEMING REMNANT	164
XIV. THE HANDWRITING OF EVENTS	174

I

THE FIGHT FOR CHARACTER

"Children of God, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

—JOHN 1: 12, 13.

IN days of depression the battle of life is a hard fight. To maintain one's integrity and to win a worthy character is real warfare for anyone who is not drifting. We are torn asunder, not as the mediæval poets had it, by four horses, but by two worlds. You recall how Robert Browning put it in "Easter Day":

*"How very hard it is to be
A Christian! Hard for you and me.
Not the mere task of making real
That duty up to its ideal;
Effecting thus complete and whole
A purpose of the human soul—
For that is always hard to do.
Hard I mean, for me and you
To realize it more or less
With even moderate success,
Which commonly repays our strife
To carry out the aims of life.*

*The sole thing that I remark
Upon the difficulty this:
We do not see it where it is,
At the beginning of the race.
As we proceed it shifts its place
And where we looked for crowns to fall
We find the tug's to come—that's all."*

This shifting goal, where a man's reach exceeds his grasp, makes high living hard.

But the thought of John, writing here in the prologue of his Gospel, is that since Jesus Christ is the Son of God, Who attained perfection of character, we may become children of God, through a struggle like to His, and in the end achieve a like perfection.

Yet, "it is so very hard to be a Christian." Who of us does not feel that way? How often have we said to ourselves, "I wish I could be born into another person, with a mind, a will and a heart equal to achieving the ideals I now believe." "I see the better and approve; I follow the worse." "The good that I would, I do not." "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Suppose I ask that question of certain scientists much read in our day.

One answers, "Heredity must be your delivering angel. Everything brings forth fruit after its kind. You do not gather grapes from thorns nor figs from thistles. The Second Commandment and the law of Mendel are the same. Heredity manifests itself not unto the fourth generation only, but to the four thousandth. The germ plasm of your life cannot be altered. It can be developed, to a greater or less degree, but not changed. 'Acquired tendencies cannot be transmitted.' No matter what high culture, mental development or moral growth your father may have reached under the stimulus of outward circumstance, he cannot hand on his conquests to you, his child. You have to start where he started. If you are born a black man, a yellow man, or a red man, you are incapable of rising to the heights of a white man, because the germ of your race is an inferior strain, which no amount of effort can improve."

"Fifty members of the Bach family were musicians of note. But this was not primarily because they taught each other music, but because they inherited the capacity for it. A thousand members of the notorious Jukes family became criminals, not because of poverty, lack of education, and hopelessly bad environment, but because of inherited weakness of will, mental defectiveness, a taint of bestiality in their blood."

So says the hereditarian. Heredity is an inevitable law. We are doomed to carry our cradles on our backs all through life. We are and we have merely what our fathers have handed on to us. Heredity is all.

I am reminded of a story told me by a friend last summer. He was working around his camp up in the Lake Superior country one morning, while his little daughter was playing near. Finally she asked him if she might play inside an old unused barrel standing near. He put her into it, and she enjoyed calling from inside it and reaching her arm through the bung-hole in the side. A while later, looking up, my friend saw to his amazement a black bear rubbing against the barrel. Then he saw his daughter reach out through the bung-hole, pull the bear's tail inside and tie a knot in it. The frightened animal started to run, dragging the barrel after him. The child finally fell out and the bear made off into the woods with the barrel still attached. They did not see her again that summer. But next year as they were making camp one afternoon, the same bear appeared, coming over the hill, pulling the barrel behind her. Following her were three little bears, trotting along, and in proof of the mighty power of heredity, each cub had a little keg fastened to his tail. An acquired characteristic had been transmitted!

Heredity IS a force in life. "Blood tells." But it does not tell everything, as many of our hereditarians suppose. It is a great thing to have a good inheritance in the blood, but that is not the final force in the fight for character.

Next comes the environmentalist. He says that circumstance is the source of character. In that interesting book *Climate and Civilization*, Huntington contends that environment is the chief factor in the fight for character. Ask him what it is that makes men what they are, and he has one answer—"Climate." Buckle, in his *History of Civilization*, explains it all, saying that our characters are made by the kind of food we eat. It is not grandmothers that decide our destiny; it is our diet. Under that logic the surest way to convert the heathen and to elevate them, is to send them plenty of missionaries TO EAT. Give them a good Christian diet!

From these two extremes we turn to Professor Ross who says:

"The quality of character depends not merely upon the stock of the race, but also upon environmental conditions. Environment and education do not change heredity, but they modify it. Ideals and habits have a hereditary basis, but their development depends upon extrinsic conditions."

Illustrations of this are everywhere. Plants and animals seek to conform to their environment by mimicry in order to protect themselves from their enemies; and they are so changed by it that in time they lose some of their characteristics and acquire others. The whole biological advance is the story of discarding organs, whose

2 — Kant — 2000
THE FIGHT FOR CHARACTER 15

functions are no longer needed, or their transformation into others called for by a new environment. The feathers of the lark singing at heaven's gate were once the scales of a slimy lizard. Heredity and environment ARE forces in the fight for character but they are not the determining forces.

There is a third element, and that is our own personality—our very selves with all our powers to dare, to endure, to suffer, but never to surrender. "I am the captain of my soul," cries a modern poet. To a certain extent we are. If a man can change his food, his dress, his climate, nay, the very conditions of his world, can he not change himself? Those who are studying most zealously the psychic forces within us answer, "He can" !

They tell us of hidden resources deep in our own souls available in the fight for character. There lie within us all vast reserves of power, which can be called up in time of need. Our personalities grow, as Nature does, not by steady evolution, but by accumulation and crisis. There will be long periods when nothing happens, apparently. Then, one day, some heavy load will fall, some great opportunity will arise, and a man meets the crisis with powers that seem supernatural. But they are not supernatural. He has been storing up energy all the while, and he can bring it forth in the crisis. We say, "I didn't know he had it in him!" Of course not. But it was there just the same, a reservoir of power awaiting call.

You all have experienced this. You are tired beyond all effort. You scarcely can drag yourself along. Then suddenly some swift crisis forces you into action; and beyond any dream of possibility, you achieve the impossible. Where do you get the strength to do it? Off

in the distant regions of your personality, you have been storing up potential energy which sudden need, sudden inspiration, sudden emotion brings rushing forth to help you. Our problem is to command these reserves of the soul to help us in the fight for character. How can we call them to our help?

First of all we must sweep out of our lives the obstacles that block them on their way to help us. "Inhibitions"—our psychologists call them. There is, for instance, Fear. Ralph Trine is quite right in saying that our chief problem is to rid ourselves of "fear-thought." The energies are there, but fear holds them back. We stand like hesitating Hamlets saying, "To be or not to be; that is the question." But we make no advance. We win no victories. Then there is Conscience, which doth make cowards of us all. "A criminal doth think each bush a policeman." The sense of guilt creates in man a divided personality. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are contending there, and life is at a stalemate. Who among us does not know the fatal weakness of that hour when the voice of conscience says: "Thou art the man." Passion also is a barrier to the release of inner power. A treasured grudge will wreck a life by barriers it builds across the flow of power. Most of us know the sense of inner relief when we drop an ancient quarrel, forgive and forget, and begin to smile again. Sweep the barrier of hate away and the strain vanishes. There is no help for the release of inner power to equal goodwill.

Jesus knew all this. To men whose souls were afraid He said: "Be not anxious for tomorrow." To men held back by conscience He said: "Forget your sin. Go and sin no more." To those cherishing hate: "Forgive and ye shall be forgiven." "When thou bringest thy gift to

the altar and rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; first go and be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." The newest psychology has nothing better to offer than that.

But we shall have to do more than break down the barriers to the release of power. We shall have to believe better things about ourselves and our value to the world. Science is coming to recognize the value of faith for victory. To be sure there is a superficial philosophy that would cure all ills by auto-suggestion. But the great conquering spirits have done something more than repeat: "Every day in every way, I am growing better and better." "According to your faith be it unto you," is better than any New Thought formula. To keep alive the sense of power and of one's value to the world; to believe that the best is yet to be, is to release mighty reserves of power.

The outstanding failure of literature is Hamlet. He had a great cause. He had genius to meet it. Yet he failed because he lacked faith—faith in the universe, faith in God, faith in his fellows, faith in himself, faith in life itself. There is a passage in Conington's translation of Vergil, that expresses my thought:

*"These bring success their zeal to fan,
They can because they think they can."*

That was Jesus' program for men. There is an egotism that is divine. Jesus would instill divine self-confidence in each of us—confidence in our grandeur and in our destiny. There are two poets of our modern day who present life's contrast. One has absorbed the fatal pessimism of the disillusioned materialist:

THE FIGHT FOR CHARACTER

*" A little while when I am gone,
My life will live in music after me,
As spun foam is lifted and borne on
After the wave is lost in the full sea.
Awhile these nights and days will burn
In song, after the brief frailty of foam,
Living in light before they turn
Back to the nothingness that is their home."*

Life is but a speck of foam, which is forever sinking back into the sea, while wind and tide sweep on as blindly as before.

There is another soul. He is waiting for the end out on a South Pacific island, coughing out his life with tuberculosis. He is saying:

*" The embers of the day are red
Beyond the murky hill,
The kitchen smokes, the bed
In the darkening house is spread
And the grey woods are shrill.
So far I have been led,
Lord, by Thy will;
So far I have followed, Lord,
And wondered still.
The breeze from the embalmed land
Blows sudden toward the shore
And claps my cottage door.
I hear the signal, Lord, I understand.
The night at Thy command
Comes.
I will eat and sleep and will not question more."*¹

That is the song of faith as Robert Louis Stevenson sings it. Would you, O young heart, be strong within? Then drop those worries and those fears. Sweep away those besetting sins. Forgive as you want God to forgive. Believe in yourself, in your immortal destiny. Live as

¹ Robert Louis Stevenson, "The Embers of the Day." *Ballads and Other Poems* (Scribner's).

you see Jesus live. Try His way, and up from the depths within you will come forth powers to make you strong.

But do not stop there. You cannot, with all your own mighty powers, do all. The fight for character is too stern a battle for you, without the help of God. If I may paraphrase this text of John with its formula for character, it can read thus: "Children of God, who are born, not of heredity nor environment nor of the inner urge of the soul, but of God." Our highest grandeur is unachieved until we are touched by the power of God. We inhabit a living universe. It is not, as this materialistic age is wont to believe, a dead mechanical thing to be exploited for its material treasures. It is a living universe, a thing to be loved and used for life. The universe is the Body of the Divine. The spirit that is above all, is IN all and THROUGH all. It is what we call God. He is available for help in the fight for character.

That was no mere vision which Elisha's servant saw in Dothan. The skies ARE full of the chariots and horsemen of the Almighty. We can summon all the mighty Power that rolls the stars along to our own help. The great World Spirit lies within reach of our spirits. We open our lives to Him, and He comes in, just as the tide flows into the inlets and bays of the sea. "He dwelleth not in temples made with hands." "The temple of God is holy, which *we* are." Wherever you turn, God is close at hand, pressing, like the mighty atmosphere, upon your life. Closer is He than breathing and nearer than hands and feet. He is within you, waiting there for you to use Him. Listen to Professor James, the psychologist:

"Man becomes conscious that his own spiritual life is co-existent with a power of the same quality,

which is operative in the universe. He can keep in working touch with it, and in a fashion get on board of it and save his higher life, when all his lower being goes to pieces in the wreck."

"Your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of." "Everyone that asketh receiveth." "To every one that knocketh it shall be opened." "I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full." So says Jesus.

Have you enough confidence in Jesus to believe Him when He says that? Then reach out and avail yourself of the resources of God in the fight for character. They are here available at any moment. That is the "gospel," the good news Jesus came to bring. His message is nothing less than this: "You do not have to fight alone. God is here with all His help. Ye shall receive power when His spirit comes upon you. He is waiting for you to lay hold on all the resources of the Divine. He is waiting for you to open your life to Him, saying, 'Come!'"

Heredity, environment, our hidden powers—all these are available in the fight for character. But beyond all these is God. All things are yours. All the past: heredity and all its achievements. All the present: environment and its opportunity. All of yourself: your energies and your will to be. All of God: His will for your highest and your best.

At the close as at the beginning we turn to Browning. He is writing his verses on The Potter in "Rabbi Ben Ezra." The clay is our heredity, the stuff of life; the wheel is circumstance, our environment; the whirl is our personality; but the Hand is God.

*" Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.*

.

*He fixed thee 'mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou forsooth, would fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed."*

II

IMAGINATION AND RELIGION

ALL the great psychologists from Plato onward have discerned at least three functions of the human mind—to remember, to reason, and to will. But there is a fourth faculty that is in and through all others—the imagination. Aristotle called memory “the scribe of the soul.” If that is so then imagination is its angel—its messenger. For imagination takes what memory records and gives it a vivid setting before the reason, which is the judge of the soul, so that reason may pass on its decision to the will for action. The will is the motor of the soul. It takes what memory has recorded and reason decided and drives it into action. Here too imagination has a rôle. It goes before the will and finds a path for it to travel. It is the courier of the will. It sets before the mind the denouement of the journey and the scenes along the way, picturing the trail to follow and the goal to reach.

We do not live by just what we remember, what we reason, and what we will. The final goal we reach is marked and measured by the part imagination plays in the drama presented by the memory, reason and will. The imagination is the most useful, vital and splendid faculty of the soul. It is a power beside which Aladdin’s lamp is a slow and stupid thing. It will build castles in Spain. It will set a beggar on horseback. It will turn

tinsel to gold. It is the true philosopher's stone. It will shift our spirits in a moment from slums to Paradise. It will elevate us from sodden, sordid situations into the very felicities of heaven. Worry is imagination gone wrong, and ecstasy is imagination inspired.

We come to our knowledge by imagination. Every child is under the sway of it. That is why heaven lies all about him in his infancy. A little girl with her doll will be transformed into a glorified mother. A little boy with his toy-boat will become a swashbuckling sailor, daring adventurous seas forlorn. Children come to their knowledge of life by peopling their world with imaginative realities. You do not have to buy expensive toys for them. A bundle of rags is quite as useful and more pleasurable to a girl than a French doll, just because it leaves so much to her imagination. The end of all education is an educated imagination. He who does not get that out of school days, never will achieve, no matter how full his head may be of facts.

Imagination awakes in childhood long before reason. The "eye of childhood fears the painted devil," or cherishes the pictured saint, according as his imagination is educated. A child's wild tales of impossible happenings are not the work of that fork-tailed spirit who "was a liar from the beginning." They are an uneducated imagination at work upon newly-discovered facts of life.

Now, we all are children of a larger growth. We live in a world of make-believe as real as that of Peter Pan. We come to our knowledge, to our achievements through the imagination. The other day I met a friend of the yesteryears, and we fell to talking about a mutual friend, who is one of the greatest personalities I ever have known. My friend's estimate of him was, "Scudder had

an imagination touched with faith and love." What finer thing can be said of any man?

It is by an educated imagination that we have discovered the facts of the universe. Scientists dream of a new star in the heavens, a new reaction in a test tube, a new truth undiscovered, and lo! out of their imaginings these things have come to us. "We scientists do our work by hoping, guessing, dreaming," said Charles Darwin.

A business man comes to his achievements by the same path. He gives his imagination free play and follows his dreams, and there rises before him the picture of what he may make of his ventures, in perfected product, in expanded markets, in increased returns, in larger usefulness.

It is equally true of what we call the decorative side of life. When our church was being built, I frequently conferred with Mr. Klauder, the architect, and told him of our situation and our needs. He then dreamed on these matters. And then one day when I walked into his office, he set before me a picture of this edifice in all its beauty and completeness. Every stone was numbered and fitted into place. Every detail was planned, every item conceived in the imagination of the architect, before a single hand touched its creative task. He had been seeing things invisible. Every creator of what is beautiful does that, from building a bridge to writing a poem, from painting a masterpiece to creating a symphony.

So also do we make our social advances. Someone dreams of a better day for men, with larger liberty, ampler sustenance, richer blessing, fuller life. And someone puts the dream into action. So the race has drawn nearer its Utopias; so it has marched out of the jungle and the cave into the city. So it will come at last to the

New Jerusalem, where sin shall be no more, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Someone has to imagine it before it can be real.

*"It is a vision waiting and aware;
And you must draw it down, O men of worth—
Draw down the New Republic held in air,
And make for it foundations on the earth."*

*"The Lyric Seer beheld it as a feast,
A great white table for the people spread;
And there was knightly joy, with Christ the Priest
And King of Labor sitting at the head."*¹

Today it is the dream of idealists that some day will bring forth the reality of a world at peace, of an economic life where each shall share justly the returns of labour, where righteousness shall girdle all human relationships, and the world will be neighbourhood in spirit as it is in fact.

In spite of all the cruelties, the wrongs and the crimes, committed in the name of liberty, let us not be too hasty in passing judgment on the revolutionary movements and social upheavals of our time. Who are we that we should pass judgment on a dream—we who have made such a mess of social living! Remember that whatever social good we have, came from someone's dream, from that of a St. Augustine, a Martin Luther, a Washington, or a Lincoln. Someone dreams of a new heaven and a new earth, and sets his face steadfastly to go to it. His imagination has done it.

*"All that we glory in was once a dream,
The World-Will marches onward, gleam on gleam."*

¹ Edwin Markham, "To Heroic Men," in *Poems* (Doubleday, Doran & Co.).

So come to pass our ethical advance, our moral victory. And so under the power of imagination come moral regress and defeat. A man becomes morally what his imagination holds before his attention. There is no better illustration than Jesus' picture of the prodigal boy. He is living there in his father's house, to all appearances a model son. One day he asks for his patrimony. What a man does with his money is decided by his dreams. In his country home, this boy had been imagining himself as part of the wild life of a distant city. His imagination had pictured the pleasures of riotous living. So he gathers all together and takes his journey into a far country and there wastes his substance in folly. His imagination had made him that kind of man.

- * There is another picture of him. He has spent all, and comes to utter want. He, a Jew, is tending swine! There amid the husks his imagination begins to work the other way. It envisions his father's house among the hills. He remembers that even the servants there were never hungry. He pictures himself at home again, with clean clothes, and enough to eat, and his father's blessing upon him. Soon his imagination works his moral redemption. He says: "I will arise and go to my father." His imagination has worked with his memory, his reason, and his will to make of him a returning prodigal.

What if he had directed his imagination to the right way before ever he left home? All the ills that come to men from their moral mistakes could be averted, if they had but imagination to project themselves into "the moment after." If every criminal could see himself in prison or in the electric chair; if, as he plays his crime on the stage of his imagination, he could play also the

scene beyond it, what would not he and his world be saved?

Our moral life, good or bad, is determined by what "we do in the dark, every one in the chambers of his imagery." That is why the greatest of all moral teachers said that to hate one's brother was to be guilty of murder. The cherished image becomes the deed. "Out of the heart," where imagination does its work, "are the issues of life."

Here, too, are the issues of all religious experience. Religion is first and last an affair of the imagination. Walter Lippmann in his *Preface to Morals* says:

"Modernity destroys the disposition to believe that behind the visible world of physical objects and human institutions there is a supernatural kingdom from which ultimately all laws, all judgments, all rewards, all punishments, and all compensations are derived."²

Why should modernity destroy that fundamental conception of a supernatural world—of God? "Because," says Mr. Lippmann, "you cannot see these things." Since when was seeing—believing? Certainly not in scientific modernity. Not in chemistry; every single one of its deductions and benefits has come because chemists believe that behind the outward phenomenon, invisible chemical laws are operating. Not in the field of electricity. Electricity is the riddle of science. No man can tell what it is. We use it to give light, to carry sound, to do a hundred things, but nobody ever has seen it. Electricians "endure as seeing that which is invisible," and persist in

² Walter Lippmann, "*A Preface to Morals*," p. 143 (Macmillan).

making applications of electricity, even though they do not know what it is and never have seen it.

Similarly, it is not by sight, but by insight that we come to a knowledge of things religious. Insight is a child of the imagination. Take the fundamental truth of knowing that there is a God. This knowledge does not come from the logic of the creeds nor from the arguments of theologians. We find God through our imagination. Every spiritual reality is spiritually discerned—from the conviction that your friend loves you up to your faith in God. Jesus said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." What He meant was that you must put your spirit into tune with the life of God, if you would know Him. You have to let your imagination build your conception of Him out of what is highest in yourself. If someone says, "But that is making God in your image," let us frankly answer, "It is." And why not? There is no other way of getting into fellowship with God than to live in the imagination of things god-like. We come to every other truth that way. Why not so approach the truth of God?

Primitive man looked out upon his external world. He saw the lightning, heard the thunder, sensed the moral consciousness of his own being. Out of these he brought forth his first conception of God. A poor and partial conception it was, to be sure. But ages roll by, and still the imagination is working on the picture. Jacob rests his head upon a stone in Bethel, fleeing far from home. His imagination is working and he sees angels ascending and descending on a ladder that reaches up to heaven. He thought he had left all that behind in Canaan. But he builds an altar there and exclaims in surprise: "Surely God is in this place and I knew it not." Moses

turns aside to see a burning bush that the desert heat has set aflame. He uses his imagination upon "this wonder," and he hears the voice of God speaking out of it. He takes his shoes off his feet. He is standing on holy ground.

Long ages pass, of prophet and of seer, until Jesus, the supreme artist of the imagination, appears, saying, "God is spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." All the long pathway to that high conception of the "Power behind the Universe," "The Force in us making for righteousness," "The *clan vital*," "Jehovah," "Our Father in Heaven," (whatever you call Him) is a way paved with men's imaginings. Horace Bushnell once said:

"When God made man, He looked on His work and behold, it was very good. But God considered His work and said: 'Man is not finished yet. There is no door in him large enough to let me in. I will open in him the great door of imagination, that I may go in to him.'"

The very moment a man begins to visualize himself through his imagination as part of the living universe, he begins to think of the forces that create it, in terms of life. Being himself a part of it, the whole must have his own image behind it. Its creator must be at least as himself.

"Pick up a stone and throw it into a lake. Am I mistaken in believing that the way the stone falls is determined by the whole structure of the universe? It would fall in a different parabola if Sirius did not blaze in the night. Carlyle says that if an Indian were to beat his squaw, on the shore of Lake Superior, the blows of his

stick would reverberate through the universe. The exercise of any power depends upon the existence of the totality of power."³

The existence of anything in the universe makes it a part of the universe. . . . Personality is such a thing.

Sir Oliver Lodge, pondering on that truth, said: "The moment you have sensed the reality of your own personality, you have opened the way for the personality of God."

The pictures we imagine of God may not be of His ultimate reality; the experiences we imagine we have with Him may be very partial. When we see Him through ourselves, we see Him through a mirror darkly. But so far as we can realize Him by imagination, we can know Him just as we can know the sea by beholding its nearer shore.

Serapion, the old monk of Egypt in the fifth century, declared that God was an old man like himself with white hair and whiskers. Challenged to prove it, he said, "I have so found God." That crude conception which served him has been radically altered in our day. We see God in fairer lines. But it is the same reality we see. Our imaginations have widened, that is all.

I have a friend who spent several years as a missionary among the Esquimaux in Alaska. A problem arose when it came to interpret God to them in an image they could understand. The Twenty-third Psalm would not do, with all its beauty, for those who never had seen a shepherd or a sheep. So he gave them another picture of God's loving care out of their own life. He likened the divine concern for His child to the care with which arctic

³ Herbert Parrish, "A Brighter and a Better Faith," in *The Century Magazine*, Winter Number, 1930, p. 96.

animals will lead their young to places where food and shelter may be found. He taught them Kipling's verse:

*"Who clears the grounding berg,
And guides the grinding floe,
He hears the cry of the little kit-fox
And the lemming in the snow."*

To God's child up there on the ice, that was every bit as great and wonderful as, "He leadeth me beside the still waters." Religion is a thing of the imagination.

That is why, when Jesus came, He so gripped the hearts of men. His appeal was to the imagination. He did not exhort men to study the Law, nor even to read the Scriptures. He came painting pictures before the eyes of their imaginations—pictures of God and of themselves and their relations. He laid down a fundamental law that men ought to love God with all their heart and mind and soul and strength and their neighbour as themselves. Then He proceeded to set that ideal in their imaginations by every conceivable picture. They said: "Never man spake like this man. His words are full of grace and truth." The homeliest of their daily experiences were not too mean to evoke His word: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like—THIS!"

He set religion in the imagination of men. Every one of the virtues He made prominent involves the use of the imagination. Think of the Golden Rule: "As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." A man cannot do that without using his imagination. He has to put himself in the other's place to do it. He must use his imagination to achieve that. So it is with justice, and mercy, and loving-kindness, and all the other

graces we call Christian. No one can be a full Christian without using his imagination.

Jesus thus caught the attention of men and won the devotion of the world because He was able to put Himself in the other fellow's place. He kindled the imaginations of men everywhere with His pictures of God, of God's Realm, of God's people, and of God's blessings. Think of it! There was Rome off there to the West. The Roman was the most unimaginative and practical man of the ancient world. He had nothing of the imaginative genius that was the glory of Greece. But the strange thing about it is that three centuries after Jesus touched Rome, it became a land where poetry and art came to their noblest fullness. The hand of Jesus touched the practical, stolid, busy Roman until he became the imaginative child of Italy with Leonârdo, and Dante, and Petrarch, and Michelangelo.

He has been doing that for personal lives all down the years, making of men "new creations." In John Masefield's "Everlasting Mercy," Saul Kane is the village wastrel, a drunken bum, living out the dregs of a sordid, sensuous life. Through a Quaker woman Christ touches him, as he staggers out of a "pub" one night into a terrible storm. Everything is changed, but most of all his imagination. Now he is singing:

*"The station brook to my new eyes,
Was babbling out of Paradise."*

The whole world is new. He goes out into the country.
The cattle are lying in the grass:

*"I thought all earthly creatures knelt
From rapture of the joy I felt."*

A plowman yonder is turning a furrow, and white gulls are following him:

*"O Christ who holds the open gate,
O Christ who drives the furrow straight,
O Christ, the plough, O Christ, the laughter
Of holy white birds flying after."*

All you can say of Saul Kane is that his imagination is reborn. He walks in newness of life. He has gone way back to that day when Jesus, speaking to His contemporaries, said: "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." He was thinking of a reborn imagination. The word He used so often for "repent" means "to change the mind." Give your imagination a new setting!

The sad, sad thing about much of life today is that so many people have had their imaginations corrupted, or else are not using them at all. You remember in the record of those days before the flood, it is written of the men of that day: "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." What an awful indictment of a race. Paul, looking out upon his world, spoke thus of the Romans: "They became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." That is a better description of Roman depravity than Juvenal ever gave.

What shall we say of our generation? Where are the imaginings of men leading them? For multitudes their images of pleasure are those which the lust of the eye and the lust of the body fulfill. Their dreams of glory are of lordship over men in the mastery of might. Their visions of money are confined to their strong boxes, and not to the potential good that lies in their gains. Their

dream of Utopia is of a situation where there is plenty of bread and the games. They have no concern for making a better world, but only of improving their position in the one that is. Is it too much to say that the distresses of our time are with us because men have grown vain in their imaginations and their foolish hearts are darkened?

And what of our religion? It is the tragedy of many Christian people that they are lacking in imagination, in a sense of wonder, in a feeling of awe, strong enough to make their religion mean something. We are sophisticated. We are so used to the discoveries of a clever world that "*nil admirari*" is our motto. You remember how Isaiah called to a people not unlike ourselves?

"Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed."

Have we grown fat until we have no imagination to see God, to hear Him, to envision His ways, and to imagine any plan He has for us in His universe? Are we so dull that we cannot see in the wonders of the world the garments of God; nor realize that "earth's crammed with heaven and every common bush aflame with God"? Are we saying as an American said to his guide when shown the majestic ruins of the Coliseum in Rome: "My idea of all this is to let bygones be bygones. We got a bigger stadium than that in Chicago."

Here is Christ going about doing good among men, speaking His wonderful words of life, making His mighty

sacrifice for you and me; mocked and scourged and crucified that we might have life, and saying in the end, "I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me." And yet somehow we are not drawn into a loyalty and a life that are Christlike. Why not? Is it because our imaginations are so dulled by our materialism that we do not see Him standing here in the midst of our contemporary life; do not hear His voice above the roar of our noisy traffic? Where is our imagination that we behold no vision of the redeeming Immanuel here among us?

In the epilogue of Shaw's play *Saint Joan*, the chief figures in her execution are gathered in the palace of the Dauphin of France, now Charles VII of France, for whom she has fought. Twenty-five years have rolled by since the Maid of Orleans met the flames.

De Stogumber, the archbishop's chaplain, who has represented his superior at the execution is saying to the soldier who lighted the flames:

"... I am not cruel by nature."

The Soldier: "Who said you were?"

De Stogumber: "Well, you see, I did a very cruel thing once, because I did not know what cruelty was like. I had not seen it, you know. That is the great thing. You must see it. And then you are redeemed, saved."

The Soldier: "Were not the sufferings of our Lord Christ enough for you?"

De Stogumber: "No! Oh no; not at all. I had seen them in pictures, and read of them in books, and had been greatly moved by them as I thought. But it was no use. It was not our Lord that redeemed me, but a young woman I actually saw burned to death. It was dreadful! Oh most dreadful! But it saved me. I have

been a different man ever since, though a little astray in my wits sometimes."

Then Cauchon breaks in,

Cauchon: "Must, then, a Christ perish in torment in every age, to save those who have no imagination?"⁴

I ask that question of this age of mine: "Must then a Christ die in torment in THIS AGE to save those who have no imagination?"

⁴ Bernard Shaw, *Saint Joan*, p. 154 (Brentano, New York).

III

DIVINE RESTORATIVES *

"He restoreth my soul."—PSALM 23: 3.

IT is difficult to preach from the Psalms. It is like trying to preach from a strain of music. There is something more in music than words can express. The Psalms are both music and poetry. They appeal to the imagination, and search the intangible realities of the soul. Life itself is the only commentary worthy to interpret them.

The Twenty-third Psalm is a lyric of the heart. The king who had been a shepherd boy writes of Him Who is the Shepherd of weary souls. He looks back in loving remembrance to his childhood occupation, and sings, in the imagery of his calling, a song of God's loving care. The rest and the refreshment the shepherd brings his flock describe the restoration of soul that comes to him who is gathered into the fold of God. Man is vastly more than a sheep, and the Shepherd of Israel will lead man's spirit to the waters of rest, and restore him with the refreshment of His green pastures.

There is offered us here a suggestion very familiar. Exhaustion, failure, disappointment are forever leaving their marks of weariness upon us. Our need is inner restoration. God alone can restore our souls.

How real is the experience of weariness and exhaustion

* Before the Summer Vacation.

in the life we live today. "The weariness, the fever and the fret," which Byron lamented, are the common experience of us all. The other day I picked up a physician's magazine, and read an article concerning a certain disease very common in our day. The writer stated that this was a very frequent trouble with people who have "anxious occupations." What occupation is there that is not an "anxious" one now? There is an undertone of worry and of weariness in every task.

Part of it is produced by the strain of the life we must live. The rush and hurry and strain of urbanized, mechanized life are leaving their mark upon us. "Overworked muscles leave upon the very structure of their tissues poisonous by-products." There is a vital relationship between a tired body and a spent soul. If toil be too long or too complicated, there is left a surplus of waste beyond what nature can care for. It clogs our personality, and fatigue and despondency follow. A hurried age becomes a pessimistic age. Tired souls can understand how Hamlet felt:

"I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all mirth, foregone all custom of exercise; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors."

Who among us has not felt that way, when the zest goes out of life and our tired bodies seek the rest that remaineth for the people of God. But there is a deeper

weariness than that which the toils and problems of life impose upon us. There is a weariness that our own attitudes create. Roger Babson in one of his recent publications, says that it is not hard work that has worn so many men to their death in the past few years. It is worry and a lack of peace within. Food and rest and recreation will not satisfy that weariness. We do not live by bread alone. We need some Power not ourselves to summon up spiritual reserves from within, until weariness is forgotten and the impossible achieved. Christian Science has no monopoly over this power.

The disciples were amazed, that day when they left Jesus famished by the well in Samaria, to find Him on their return, refreshed and exhilarated. He had eaten, He said, food that they knew not of. Well, the disciples of Jesus for twenty centuries have found that secret of refreshment. Duty, disappointment, disillusionment come to all. "Even the youths faint and are weary and young men utterly fail." Because of all this a sense of futility is filling life. Dorothy Parker echoes the feeling of thousands:

*" There's little in taking or giving,
There's little in water or wine;
This living, this living, this living,
Was never a project of mine.
Oh, hard is the struggle, and sparse is
The gain of the one at the top;
For art is a form of catharsis,
And love is a permanent flop.
And work is the province of cattle,
And rest's for the clam in the shell.
So I'm thinking of throwing the battle—
Would you kindly direct me to hell? "*¹

¹ Dorothy Parker "Coda," *The Sunset Gun* (Liveright Publishing Corp.).

I read a sermon recently on "The Disillusionments of the Twentieth Century." Its theme was that our times have inherited, in a peculiar way, great disillusionments. We believed greatly in democracy, and democracy has failed to bring in the Age of Gold. We trusted science, but with all its marvels science has left our souls unblest. We dreamed of peace and brotherhood among men, but the world was never so warlike as now. We thought that the genius of the inventor and improved economic technique would produce a great and permanent prosperity, but lo! men never have been so poor as now, never so burdened by debt.

There is about us and about our civilization the suggestion of spent souls. Our literature reflects our pessimism. Our poetry and music move in minor measures. There is much of "miserere" in it. There is little of "jubilate." It is hard to find a Lorenzo saying to his Jessica:

*"Look! how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of pure gold:
There's not the smallest orb that thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins."*

Something has shut out the stars and the voices of the angels. Supremely we need restoration of soul. Where shall we seek it? Who can bring it but God Himself? So far as present revelation goes we are God's highest creation. God will not fail in His best endeavour. He will not leave us in the dust. "He restoreth my soul."

How does He do it? Well, for one thing He does it, as the poet's figure suggests, by the ministry of His world of quiet and beauty around us. We can look up through nature to nature's God, and behold a power

divinely interfused through all her ways, working out our restoration. There is a real connection between green pastures and still waters and a restored soul. Let us but go to the solitary places apart, and let them have their way with us, and the transforming touch of the Shepherd will rest upon us.

How often have I known this blessed restoration. Contrary to general belief, June is the most strenuous month in the life of a minister. The hot weather begins. It grows harder to write sermons. Personal engagements and public addresses multiply one hundred per cent. A thousand diverse and adverse duties cause the soul to grow weary. But Providence has cast my lot in pleasant places. Along comes the middle of July and the north-land is calling. Late some afternoon a group of us will park our cars at our favourite camping spot, up where the brown waters of the Two Heart mingle with the blue of Lake Superior.

We pitch our tent in the glow of a crimson sunset, close by the dark forest. We cook our supper in the falling twilight, and linger for a while around a campfire amid the pines. Then eight hours of unbroken slumber. The rising sun will find us on the stream. Early morning freshness is in the air, and the scent of pine regales the nostrils. All about us the forest. Not a human habitation for forty miles! Only God's wild creatures are there. A kingfisher protests shrilly at our invasion of his ancient rights. A porcupine climbs a tree close by. Around the bend below, we hear the splashing of a deer come down to "drink his fill."

We wade the stream, and let the lure drift down the current. Now on a gleaming ripple, now in a dark pool, now under a tag alder, now under the lee of a fallen log,

a trout leaps. The line stiffens. An electric current charges up the arm and down the spine. A short struggle and the first trout of the season is flopping in the creel! Then another! And another! Noon comes, and back to camp with a sizzling skillet and the odour of bacon and coffee and frying fish in the air. A few days of this and I waken some morning, and lo!

"God's in His heaven—

All's right with the world."

Nature has worked her miracle of restoration. "He leadeth me beside green pastures and still waters."

Again, God restores our souls by the refreshing contacts we have with our fellow beings. Once Mrs. Browning and Mr. Huxley sat beside one another at a dinner. Mrs. Browning asked, in the course of conversation: "Tell me, Mr. Huxley, how do you explain your wonderful vitality, that keeps you so fresh and interesting?" After a pause, Huxley said: "Mrs. Browning, I had a friend." How rich in restoratives are the friendships we hold for those we love. What strengthening is in the clasp of a friendly hand, the look of a friendly eye, and the sound of a friendly voice. What refreshment to share with friends our hopes, our dreams, our understandings. What invigoration comes from the happiness and well-being we bring to those for whom we toil.

There is no weariness in the labour love evokes. Dr. Hadfield tells of an explosion in a munition factory in England during the World War. A woman, after doing twelve hours of work, rose from her bed, and, in anxiety for her husband and son, ran the whole distance, seven miles, at top speed and then worked all night caring for

the wounded, professing herself not to be tired at all. What a restorative love is!

Last year an intelligent, well-educated native of India wrote to an American friend, telling of his desire to visit America, to see this Christian land of which he had heard so much. Especially did he want to see the Christian people, who were his friends and who had done so much for India; for, he said, "I like your contagion." This is a phrase of meaning and of power. It is through the contagion of other spirits that our spirits are restored, especially by those who are greater and wiser than we. Their faith, who have mastered ways yet untrodden by our feet and won victories yet unachieved by us, brings assurance that we too can master. By them we are made strong for the fight.

Robert Speer tells us that it used to be the custom in the colleges of England to indulge in horseplay, when an honorary degree was conferred upon a candidate. When Oxford conferred the doctor's degree on David Livingstone, the students came with their pop-guns and their pea shooters. But, as the lank, gaunt figure of the missionary stood before them, his face tanned by the African sun and furrowed by sixteen years in the wilderness, his arm limp by his side from the bite of a lion, a hush fell upon them all. They were in the presence of a man bigger than any honour their university could confer. So we always gather from men like that new visions and new powers, to lift us out of the exhausting, the trivial and the commonplace, into new heights of being.

But God restores our souls in still more intimate ways than these. We do not have to be mystics to receive conscious visitations of the Divine. When the heart is

bowed with sorrow, oppressed with failure, perplexed with the tangled skein of events, we have but to open the floodgates of our life, and the grace of God flows in with His refreshing waters. This is one of the ministries of prayer. Dr. Jowett calls prayer "digging channels for the water of life." Prayer is a psychological state putting us into contact with God. It is the adventure of opening the soul and leaving all to Him; of giving up our worry and fret, and leaning on the everlasting arms. Whatever friendship does, prayer does much more, for prayer is the friendship of God. It is His opportunity to help His child. He cannot help until we give Him a chance. Let us but open the life to Him, Who is "closer than breathing and nearer than hands and feet," and His wonderful restoration begins.

*" Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make!
What heavenly burdens from our bosoms take!
What parched grounds refresh as with a shower!
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear;
We kneel, how weak! we rise, how full of power!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others—that we are not always strong—
That we are overborne with care—
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled—when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee? "* 2

There is yet another way of restoration. The old churchmen used to call it "the means of grace." It is worship. Worship is the fellowship of prayer. It is a company of kindred souls seeking and finding the presence of God. What restorations there are in this! One

² Richard C. Trench.

of the great artists of the Victorian Era was James Smetham. His *Letters* are the revelation of a marvelous spirit. Here is a picture he brings us of October 22, 1873:

"Feel fresh and happy. Thought of the leaders' meeting last night. There was the superintendent. There was a gardener, a baker, a cheesemonger, a postman and myself. Here were six people delightfully sitting in a quiet room, to forward these ends. What is proposed in each of those ends? 'Peace on earth, goodwill to men.' The very heart and substance of the angels' song, and not a particle of anything else. No wonder that being so privileged as to get into such healthy air I have so often come home cured to the core—come home, as last night, so fresh, so calm, so delivered from all my fears and troubles."³

I wonder if those Christians who seek rest and recreation on Sundays, afar from the place of worship, on the highways, the golf course, the ball park, or the many other crowded ways of life, would not be more blest, turning to some quiet place of prayer and thought for others. How can any soul be earthbound, when in the hour of worship we stand and sing together as we have this morning:

*"My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary
Saviour divine!"*

Here before God, holy fires are kindled on the altars of the heart, new purposes are born in the will, and we go forth to new power. God has restored our souls, be-

³ *Letters of James Smetham*, p. 331 (Macmillan).

cause, "as our custom is, we go into the synagogue on the Sabbath day."

But best of all God's sweet restorers is Jesus Christ Himself. The conditions of victorious living are to have faith and hope and love, and the sense of being sustained by a Power higher than ourselves. Where shall we get these things save through the touch of Him Who always had them? When He walked the ways of men, numberless people sought to "touch Him." They said: "If I but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be made whole." Under the magic of His presence they were reborn into newness of life. They became at-one with the life of God, Whom to know is life and joy and peace.

*"His touch has still its ancient power,
No word from Him can fruitless fall."*

That was why He came, "that we might have life and have it more abundantly"—restored, overflowing life. In Him is a well of water springing up unto eternal life. If a man drink of this water, he never will thirst again. His soul will be divinely restored. "In him is life which is the light of men."

Once Edwin Markham saw the picture "The Man With the Hoe." In his poem he laments the death of manhood, the crushed spirit, the broken life, the hopeless heart of this "brother to the ox." There is another picture that ought always to hang beside it. It is "The Angelus." The same peasant is there, but by his side is another, a girl. Love has entered into the life of the man with the hoe. In the distance rises a church spire. It is the hour of evening prayer, and the peasants stand with bowed heads. God has entered into the life of the

man with the hoe. The Love Supreme has found him. His soul is uplifted and glorified.

The contrast here is that of our own weary souls leaning with the weight of life's burdens, and our souls restored by the touch of the Divine. Our need of restoration varies. Sometimes it is the touch of nature, sometimes the presence of a friend, sometimes the supporting strength of the everlasting arms.

Our deepest weariness is weariness of soul, the weariness that is within. It is the Shepherd-God who works our resoration, whether He does it by leading us to green pastures and still waters, or bringing us into the presence of loving hearts, or opening our lips to prayer and praise, or calling us to walk with Him along a path that leads through the valley of shadows, across a lonely hill, to the Land of light, where God and His angels are, and where "we dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

IV

UTILIZING THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE *

"And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, 'Manna?' (What is it?) for they wist not what it was."—EXODUS 16: 15.

IT was a long, long trail a-winding, from Cairo to Canaan, and in their forty years of desert wandering the children of Israel came often face to face with the Providence of God. So it seemed that morning when, with their food supply exhausted and starvation facing them, they woke to find the fields covered with a growth they had not seen before, and which they found good for food. In their surprise they asked one another, "Manna?" "What is it?" So the exclamation came to be the trade name of the food. "Manna." What it was we do not know. Probably it was a fungus growth, peculiar to the country into which they now had come. It grew overnight like mushrooms, and it spoiled in storage. At any rate it looked like bread, it supplied the place of bread, and as far as they were practically concerned, it *was* bread.

They did not know what it was nor how it had come. It presented a problem to their minds, which they were quite incapable of solving. Yet every day they gathered it, and used it for their sustenance, and found in it the strength they required. They appropriated what they

* A Discussion of the Uses of Faith in an Age of Fact.

did not understand. They availed themselves of what was mystery. They found nourishment in what their minds could not grasp. They utilized the incomprehensible.

We are forever doing that. Take, for instance, the compass. Every ship that sails the seas has to depend on the compass to guide it on its way. Yet not one of those thirty thousand travellers that sailed for Europe on a single day last week, not a captain on one of those twenty-six liners, not a scientist in any laboratory on earth knows why that little needle is so splendidly faithful in pointing to the magnetic north. Whenever we sail the seven seas we utilize the incomprehensible.

Or here is electricity. It is our mightiest and our most commonplace source of power. It brightens our homes, rings our bells, drives our motors, cooks our food, makes possible the music of yonder organ. Ask me or any other man what electricity is, and not a soul has an answer. No man knoweth. Yet every moment of every day, we are everyone dependent upon it for something. We utilize what is incomprehensible.

For several summers now, adventurous spirits have been making flights into the stratosphere, trying to find out more about this envelope of atmosphere which encompasses our globe. Perhaps some day we shall solve the problem of how it came to be and why it is. Apparently there is no other planet that possesses it. But here is the point—not one of us waits until all the problems of the atmosphere are solved before we begin to use the air. We breathe it, are held up by its pressure, live by it. We utilize what we do not comprehend.

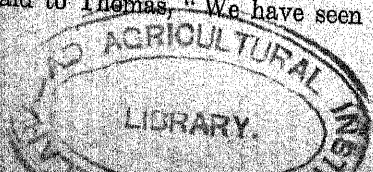
"In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love." It is the time of trysts and weddings

50 UTILIZING THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE

and engagements. The symbol of all love's ecstasies and its vows is a diamond ring. Appropriately it flashes back the purity, the radiance, and the loyalty love wishes to express. What is a diamond? Suppose I ask this lover, putting a ring on his lady's finger, what it is that he is giving her. Were he strictly accurate he would answer: "I am giving her a form of crystallized carbon, in which every carbon atom is symmetrically surrounded by four other carbon atoms, arranged at the corners of a tetrahedron in such manner that the whole crystal is one continuous molecule." Does he say that? Oh no! He does not do that. He answers, "This lovely jewel is a sacrament and symbol of something even more beautiful—our love." Neither he nor she knows what a diamond really is, but to high and holy purposes they utilize what is incomprehensible.

We are all doing it all the while. I wonder why it is that in the realms we call spiritual we do not do it more. We miss *manna* when we do. We lose much of what is divinely given, when we refuse to utilize what we cannot explain. Our age is peculiarly that way. We call this a scientific age, but how unscientific we are in handling our spiritual manna. The method of science is to "try it out"—the method of experiment. Of all the adventurers the world has known, the scientist excels. He is forever utilizing what he does not understand, and making practical applications of what he cannot explain.

But we do not do that when we come to the affairs of the soul. We are not scientific about it. We say, "seeing is believing." Long ago an ancient doubter gave us a formula for it. His Master had appeared to several of his friends, following death by crucifixion, and they said to Thomas, "We have seen the Lord." He would



not believe them. He said, "Except I see—I will not believe." That is the formula of our age, and we seem to be quite proud of it. Science has marvellously expanded our vision. By the telescope we can see the flames leaping up out of the sun. By the microscope we can see all the minute world of life, "down in the mud and scum of things." By the X-ray we can see the inside of the body. And so we have come to think that to be real a thing must be seen. "Except I see, I will not believe." The real things are what the senses apprehend. Anything beyond the range of what eye can see and ear can hear, is, as Macbeth said, "a dagger of the mind, a false creation proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain." We have let our realism get the better of us, and cannot, like the great spirits that have moved the earth, "endure as seeing what is invisible."

We are eager externalists. Our modern way of life is like Peer Gynt's onion. He is peeling an onion, layer after layer, and discovers that it is all "outsides."

*"What an enormous number of swathings!
Isn't the kernel soon coming to light?
I'm blest if it is! to the innermost centre
It's nothing but swathings each smaller and smaller.
Nature is witty."*

Life for millions is like an onion, "all outsides," just the things you can see. There is an absence in their experience of the invisible. They do not utilize what they cannot comprehend, and so a whole universe of lofty experience which is seen by faith is forever shut away. In the higher realm of life we do not practice what is the commonplace method of the lower. We do not utilize the incomprehensible.

52 UTILIZING THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE

We think of that great word faith, as a small boy once defined it, "Faith is believing what you know isn't so." Faith, to begin with, is not just mere "believing." I know in the minds of many people it is just that. The word has degenerated to mean merely the acceptance of creedal and institutional finalities, all worked out and waiting merely the credence of the believer. It is putting our "O. K." on ideas someone else has worked out. That is a tremendous come-down from the days of the apostles. Then faith meant a personal adventure in a way of living. It was a matter of venturesomeness. It involved self-committal, devotion, loyalty, courage. It was a vital, dynamic attitude toward a new way of living.

Sherwood Eddy has said: "Faith is not believing something despite the evidence; it is daring something despite the consequence." It is utilizing the incomprehensible. It is giving substance to things hoped for and proving things not seen.

After all what is best worth proving cannot be proved. Tennyson, in "The Ancient Sage," said it years ago:

*"Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O my son,
Nor canst thou prove the world thou movest in,
Thou canst not prove thou art immortal, no,
Nor yet that thou art mortal—nay, my son,
Thou canst not prove that I, who speak with thee,
Art not thyself in converse with thyself,
For nothing worthy proving can be proven,
Nor yet disproven: wherefore be thou wise,
Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,
And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith!"*

That is a better creed for a man than to say: "Except I see, I will not believe." Let me illustrate what I am getting at. Here is our faith in our fellows. Can human

nature be trusted? Is it safe to let people govern themselves, for instance, or should they be driven with a dictator's whip? Can human nature be trusted to work out of world chaos, an honest and generous economic order? Can men and women be trusted to create the kind of homes out of which a high-minded, clean-souled, dedicated youth will come? Can we believe that in a day of moral recession, there are enough really good people, who see clearly, and behave nobly, and speak the truth in their hearts, to save our Sodoms from impending disaster?

We *just must believe* that the people can be trusted. In spite of demagogues and dictators, in spite of rackets and war making, in spite of injustice and intemperance, in spite of all the human failures of this generation, we have to believe in humanity. As a matter of fact, we do. That is why we marry and rear children, and enter professions and engage in trade. The great word in our day for faith in men is *credit*. Though that faith has been somewhat obscured in the days of depression, and credit is still restricted, we all are agreed that our salvation from this hour depends on a restoration of credit, of man's faith in man. We know that on no other basis can there be business revival or any progress. Faith in men is something nobody can see, but it is the *sine qua non* of our very existence. Our whole trouble has come, I am confident, because we have been holding a low view of our humanity, and out of that low view has come a lack of confidence in one another.

A naturalist of our times has described us thus:

"In the visible universe the Milky Way is a tiny fragment. Within this fragment of the solar system is an infinitesimal speck, and out of this speck our planet is a

54 UTILIZING THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE

microscopic dot. On this dot tiny lumps of impure carbon and water crawl for a few years until they dissolve into the elements of which they are compounded."

And a modern poet echoes his view of humanity:

*... "It's all nothing
It's all a world where bugs and emperors
Go singularly back to the same dust."*

Life has no meaning, no purpose. We are chance children of an indifferent nature. We're just "here because we're here." And that's all.

Now, nothing can surmount that cynicism about man, but a strong faith that believes, in spite of everything vast in the universe, and in spite of everything small in people, that we are "sons of God, created for a purpose, whose destiny is forever;" and to believe that we have here the stuff of Paradise, to build a new heaven and a new earth. No, we do not live by sight. We live by insight, which is another name for faith. The surest path to recovery is to make a great adventure of faith in our fellow men; by giving substance to that faith in our human relations with one another, and putting to living usefulness what we cannot prove—that humanity is worthy of our highest trust.

We are on a little higher level when we ask ourselves, "Can I have faith also that there is a Living God?" "Can I by searching find Him out?" Not at all! Here is Someone I cannot by any means comprehend. There is a suggestion that Rectitude is supreme in the universe, when I contemplate my own conscience. I think that the Power that created the world is Beauty, as I look upon this summer world around me. It seems that there must be a universal Fountainhead of Love, when I see

all the rivers of it that flow through human souls. I am quite sure that there are Mind and Heart and Will, within all things, for they are within myself. All this I call God. But God cannot be seen, measured, or held in the hand. He cannot be proved, nor disproved. My experience seems to trace His coming but I grasp Him by faith:

*" We have but faith; we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from Thee
A beam in darkness: let it grow . . ."*

And yet the knowledge that faith brings is none the less real than that which the eye unfolds. Life is larger than logic, more certain than science, profounder than any philosophy about it. After all, science is not the whole of knowledge, in fact it is only a tiny and restricted part of it, interesting and valuable in a limited field, but in nowise final. The dim equations of mathematics do not tell us the truth which makes it worth our while to live. Knowledge, even scientific knowledge, is relative. He who waits for absolute knowledge before he acts will wait forever. All that we need to know is sufficient information to justify action, and enough assurance to give direction and purpose to it. Truth is for life; its aim is to serve life, to keep it growing, and to direct it toward right ends.

To sail the ocean, I do not have to know all about its far outreach; what cities it touches, what depths it sounds, what continents it bathes, all that it is out there beyond the horizon rim—I do not need to know all that. I can swim in its waters, catch fish on its inlets, sail on its surface. I can utilize the sea without compre-

56 UTILIZING THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE

hending it. For me it has a nearer side, and knowing the nearer side I know the sea.

So with that great sea of Life that we call God. He, too, has His nearer side. We know enough about Him to live by. Never mind how vast His fullness may be. His outreach has touched us, and here upon this bank and shoal of time, we can share somewhat of His life. We really can know Him, Whom to know is life eternal. Incomprehensible though He be, we can utilize Him for our life.

That is why folks pray. There is no question about the vitalizing effect of prayer—the sense of God's nearness. Men "kneel, how weak—they rise, how full of power." Prayer is a greater dynamic than electricity. Darkness, which no electric light can reach, is banished by prayer. Prayer brings quietness to a troubled heart, spaciousness to a crowded day, new hope to a discouraged soul. It is one of the mightiest energies in all the earth. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

*"The weary ones had rest, the sad had joy that day,
They wondered how!
A ploughman singing at his work had prayed,
'God help them now.'*

*"Yes, we are always wondering, wondering how,
Because we do not see
Someone unknown, perhaps, and far away
On bended knee."*

But none understands how prayer works. Now prayer is an absurdity, except on the basis that there is Someone to be prayed TO. Never mind if you cannot comprehend God—PRAY. Just because there is mystery about it, do not cease the activity. Act upon what you do

know. Remember, as Donald Hankey said: "Religion is betting your life that there is a God." Make the bet, dare the adventure, and in you will be realized the philosophy of Jesus: "He that willeth to do my Father's will shall KNOW." "Action determines growth." That fundamental law of biology holds no less in the growth of the mind, the soul, than the growth of the body. "Wherefore we ought always to pray, and not to faint."

It is just so about our hope of salvation. From the very beginning, the human heart has sensed a lack, a weakness, an impurity of life. In the dim days of the far-off jungle, our primitive ancestors built their altars, in an effort to bring their lives into an at-one-ment with the life of the unseen power they had come to fear. Slowly, step by step, that fear was changed into awe, into reverence, into love. But still the altar fire! Why? Because the great hunger of the human heart is for atonement—at-one-ment with the life that is Divine. It is as deep a need of the civilized as the savage, the cultured as the crude.

In the fullness of time there came to earth One Who claims to be the full answer to that hunger for atonement with God. There is left us a record of His life—a life so fully godlike, that it has been the wonder of the ages. If we want to live the life of God—here it is in living form. There is a divinity about the humanity of Jesus, that leads any man who sees Him to wonder at it and to want it. "Teach me Thy secret," has been the great cry of humanity ever since the MAN was lifted up there on His cross. And millions who have answered His simple summons, "Come, follow me," bear joyful witness that they have found in Him the life of God. Their burden of fear and worry has fallen away; their

58 UTILIZING THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE

sense of guilt is gone; they have found a love that has made them happy and a power to make them holy. They have entered into newness of life. They have found the Way, the Truth and the Life. Jesus has made atonement for them, with the life of God.

Ask me how He does it? I don't know! Theology is full of theories of the atonement. Sometimes people ask me why I do not preach more about Christian doctrine. It is not because I do not appreciate and value the theory, but because I believe the presentation of the thing is more important. I might stand here on a Sunday morning and discuss the theology of our religion to some profit to some of you; but I am sure it is far better to say to all of you: "Come now, let us spend a few moments together with God." The telescope is a valuable instrument of science, but after all, the important thing is the vision of the star it brings. Theology may be a telescope to show us God. There are many telescopes for bringing the Infinite near. Theology is one, but the fact of Jesus is the greatest of them all. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. No man cometh unto the Father but by me." Is it not enough for life to leave it there? The vital thing is not to explain the theory of Jesus' atonement. It is to arise and follow Him into the life of God.

*"I know not how that Calvary's cross
A race from sin could free,
I only know His matchless grace
Has brought God's life to me."*

"We all, beholding in the face of Jesus the glory of God, are changed into the same image." What more do you need to know? You do not understand it all?

Never mind. Utilize the incomprehensible. Eat the manna. Never mind how it comes, what it is made of, how it works. Eat it. It is life.

Paracelsus in Browning's poem is discussing this very thing and he says:

*" There are two points in the adventure of the diver:
One when a pauper, he makes his plunge;
One when a prince, he rises with his pearl."*

The difference between a pauper and a prince is in the plunge. That was the secret of Jesus. He made the plunge into the life of God. "Great is the mystery of godliness." It is a hidden pearl, deep in the sea of life. Jesus plunged and He found it. You and I will find it—its lustrous beauty, its radiant purity, its enduring richness, its flashing happiness, when our life is hid with Christ in the life of God." Is it worth enough to you to say this morning with Paracelsus, "Festus, I plunge"?

V

EMPTY THRONES

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."
—II CORINTHIANS 3:17.

WHERE the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." And it is nowhere else! Consider the scene around us. For three hundred years our fathers struggled to wrest the jewel of liberty from the hands of kings. They fought to the death in the mountains of Switzerland, the plains of Italy, the moors of England, the bogs of Holland, and the forests of America, that they and their children might be free. They cut off the heads of tyrants; they opened the doors of Bastiles; they defied the powers that be, crying, "Give us liberty or give us death." They challenged the divine right of princes and popes; they scoffed at threats of hell; they mocked flaming death; they left their homes for torturing battlefields, singing, "As Christ died to make men holy, let us die to make men free;" they mingled their blood with the muddy filth of No-Man's-Land, to make the world safe for democracy.

It seemed that their dream had been fulfilled. Professor J. B. Bury, in *A History of the Freedom of Thought*, well observed that: "The struggle of reason against authority has ended in what appears to be a decisive and permanent victory for liberty. In the most

civilized and progressive countries, freedom of discussion is recognized as a fundamental principle." The counsel of Ben-Hadad's advisers to "take the kings away," had been accomplished by the sons of freedom. In every land thrones were empty. "The captains and the kings" had departed. The race at last was free.

But there is peril in an empty throne. "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." We forgot that! Unless an empty throne is watched, it soon will be filled again. The other day Mussolini was asked by an interviewer how he had come so easily to power. He answered, "Why, I saw an empty throne, and I sat down on it." And in a trice all that Mazzini had dreamed and all that Garibaldi had fought for, was gone. And here is an American woman, who has lived twenty years in Italy, and who dearly loves it, writing in an American magazine on "Why I Fled Italy." She says:

"As I stepped down the gangplank in New York, I realized the answer. I was running away from whispered warnings, 'Be careful what you say,' 'Be careful what you write,' 'Be careful what you telephone;' from frightened, suspicious eyes; from faces that seldom smiled. I was running away from fear, apathy, resignation, suppressed thought. I was running away from a people so overdisciplined that they moved like robots—a people no longer able to make any movement of their own volition."¹

There was an empty throne in Italy, and Mussolini sat down on it. There was an empty throne in Russia, but the tyrant did not depart. An American writer tells us that one day he saw one of the Communist leaders

¹ Alice Rohe, in *Liberty Magazine*, April, 1936.

sitting on the throne from which they drove the Czar, and he was polishing the mud off his boots with a piece of the drapery of it. That act is symbolic. For the dictatorship of the proletariat is quite as crude and as cruel as the tyranny it displaced. Tell that to every free American who is keen for Communism.

Almost twenty years ago the Prussian Kaiser fled for safety into the darkness of the night, leaving his throne empty. But there is a Hitler sitting on it now, and the last state of the German people is worse than the first. They are under a tyranny as barbaric as ever scourged the earth.

Italy, Russia, Germany have lost their liberty. And not they alone. Says Professor C. M. Joad in his book, *Liberty Today*:

"Over most of the so-called civilized world today liberty does not exist. Government is omnipotent and irresponsible; the press is its mouthpiece; education its propaganda; history its apologist; the arts its echo. As for democracy, the only form of government that has been able to tolerate liberty, it is today fighting for its existence. . . . Over two-thirds of the civilized world, men's minds have been sent to prison and their rulers hold the keys to their cells. . . . Dictators are not only sensitive to criticism; they are incommoded by truth."²

Herr Hitler in his book *Mein Kampf* advises the Germans: "Not to seek out objective truth so far as it may be favourable to others, but uninterruptedly to serve one's own truth." What does he mean—"One's own truth"? To the enslavement of men's minds dictators have not hesitated to seize and debase all the avenues by

² C. M. Joad, *Liberty Today* (Watts & Co., London).

which minds are reached and their opinions formed—the press, the radio, motion pictures, even art itself. Text-books are doctored and deleted to suit the purposes of "One's own truth." Truth is no longer universal. It is that which is convenient to the immediate desires of the dictator. It is "one's own."

But dictators are not content merely to enslave men's minds. They deprive their bodies of freedom. In the prisons of Japan are 95,000 political prisoners. There are 100,000 in the concentration camps of Germany, and no man knows how many in Italy. They live amid brutalities that would shock the barbarian civilizations of six centuries ago. In Russia they have not stopped at prisons. They have "liquidated" their opponents before the firing squad.

If any man is saying, "It Couldn't Happen Here," he betrays an utter lack of acquaintance with the voice of history, or the forces at work about him. It can happen anywhere! Always, people lose their liberties when they do not exercise the vigilance and enthrone the spirit, which are the price of them. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." An empty throne is a menace to an indifferent, unrighteous people. SOME regnancy will come to fill the empty place. Some Mussolini, seeing an empty throne, will sit down upon it.

Except democracy be vigilant and dominated by those deeper, inner regnancies of lofty living, it will be superseded by tyranny, and the people's liberties will disappear. For it is true, again to quote Joad, that: "When democracy declines, liberty declines with it; when government by elected authority is superseded by the rule of the party, the group, the dictator, who hold their place by power rather than by the people's consent, lib-

erty is sure to be destroyed." If then, you and I are concerned about the preservation of our liberties, we must awake to a vigilance and rise to a vision, which we do not now possess.

For one thing we must be watchful of our attitude toward liberty. Most of us take it for granted. We have grown so used to liberty that we do not realize the worth of it. I am continually besieged by propaganda from my communist and fascist friends, who deluge me with literature and with words, in violent contempt and open rebellion toward our government, telling me how much better fare the people of Russia, Germany, and Italy. Things are bad enough in America to be sure. But these men forget that this very freedom they have to "cuss the government" does not exist in these other lands. Let them say or print *THERE*, what they say and print *HERE*, and they would be in prison in less than an hour. They are careless and unappreciative and abusive of their liberty in a democracy. One could wish that every one of them might suddenly be set down in Russia, Italy, or Germany, and find out for themselves what it is to lose the liberty a democracy affords. We all are careless of our liberty. We have forgotten the price our fathers paid for it. We take it for granted, and forget that its battles have to be fought over and over again in each succeeding generation.

We listen to seductive voices promising us "security." They have a strong appeal to a people who have grown too soft for great adventuring. The dictator, on seizing power, is wont to announce that the seizure is only temporary—it is an emergency measure to tide over a crisis—that the people will be given back their liberties when the crisis is over. But he who knows anything about

history, knows that power, obtained that way, never is restored. There is not a single example in all the human story, to show that they who have grasped power by violence ever have relinquished it. If not their *desires*, at least their *fears*, induce dictators to refuse to surrender power. It is history that dictatorships become more, not less, tyrannical as they grow older. Liberty, once suppressed, is lost. It is not restored. How can we be so careless of what has cost so much, as to take our liberties for granted, and not pay the price of their conservation—which now, as always, is eternal vigilance!

But there are pretenders to the empty throne other than political dictators. There is that pretender called "the crowd." How much of our liberty of thought, of speech, of action is lost by our fear of the crowd! Spengler and other critics of our American democracy call attention to our enslavement to majority opinion. It is fundamental to our political order that the majority shall decide the issue. Viscount Bryce tells us we have deified the majority, in assuming that the majority always is right. "*Vox populi, vox dei*," the voice of the people is the voice of God. Not on your life! If we have come to that, then we are by it endangering our liberties. To set the crowd on the empty throne is perilous. Once a people develops a herd-opinion, the very foundations of democracy are weakened. Democracy sets the individual apart from the mass, and considers his needs, his opinions, his worth as vital. Governments exist by the will of the governed, for the welfare of each individual citizen, not for any particular group of him—not even for the majority group. It is the conception of democracy that the welfare of the whole is conditioned by the welfare of each. Democracy exalts the man.

We seem to have forgotten that. Our effort is at standardization, at mass production, and alas! we have standardized personality. We have developed efficient automata trained to work like ants on an ant-hill. Increasingly we enjoy a "press the button" existence. We become a race of machine tenders out of whose life creative liberty has departed. We walk to an intellectual lockstep. We listen to the same radio programs, read the same articles in syndicated newspapers, go to the same movies, until we are as near alike as two peas. The tendency of life is to make us as near alike as Ford parts.

We are forever substituting the "cheap democracy of equality for the noble democracy of liberty." Look through the advertisements in your magazines. Our national advertising literature reflects a grave peril to our democracy—the pressure of the crowd. "Such and such people drive our car, smoke our cigarettes, buy our cosmetics—therefore you ought to buy." "Twenty million people can't go wrong." Well, I wonder! Just so far as we believe that, the more the crowd enslaves us.

Ask yourself, then, whether you, a supposedly free American, are really free. You are afraid of what people will think? You do not want to be peculiar? You do not dare stand out from the crowd? Then you are not free. You have lost your individualism. When you lose that, you lose your liberty. You become a "yes man" to the mass. You are a rubber stamp of the vulgar mind.

And when enough people become so enslaved to social tyranny, it is easy for the political dictator to step in. That is just the situation he wants. The basic strategy of the dictatorship of the proletariat is to get all citizens

to a common level. It wills to sacrifice liberty for equality. That too is the promise of the fascist, only he seeks to level up instead of levelling down. So people are everywhere selling liberty for equality. They are trading splendour for security.

We all are facing that dilemma. There is but one way to solve it. We DO want more equality. The economic inequities of capitalism cry to heaven. Economic slavery is a horrible accompaniment of democracy. It grows more and more apparent that we cannot have political democracy and economic oligarchy side by side. The labourer should be free and secure in his labour and in the rights of his higher life. He has not been so under the capitalism of yesterday.

Democracy is committed to the principle of equality of *opportunity*. It will have to make that possible or it will pass. But equality that comes from regimentation, running men through a common groove, levelling their opportunities and restraining their abilities, is fatal to equality. It destroys liberty. It dwarfs personality, it stops advance, it wrecks all that human beings were created for—the development of personalities gifted with the life, and perfected in the graces of God.

No society can guarantee to its citizens equality of condition, of economic and social station. Even Communism is coming to see that. We are unequally endowed by our Creator. Nature has decreed against uniformity. Standardization is not one of her sins. But equality of opportunity is one of the inalienable rights of man. If our democracy does not give us that, it is doomed.

All this is not inconsistent with the largest liberty. The trouble with many of our movements for human

equality is that they confuse equality of opportunity with equality of station. Democracy never contemplated that. Democracy devises liberty under civil law. Civil law means liberty regulated with a view to the largest freedom for all. It does not mean equality of station, nor does it mean a man's right to do as he pleases at any and all times.

We are in the midst of a great collective era. The intertwining of our life has forced collective action upon us. We have to be neighbours to all men, whether we like it or not. How far shall we let collective action dominate us? This is not primarily a political question. It is fundamentally social and religious. I think there is but one answer. Collective action is right, only so far as it increases the liberty of all.

There was a time in human government of which it was written: "There was no king in those days, but every man did that which was right in the sight of his own eyes." But this primitive situation could not prevail long in the Land of Canaan. What was right in the sight of one man's eyes, conflicted with his brother's vision. Personal quarrels were settled by personal vengeance. Men came under the bondage of fear, from which not even "cities of refuge" could deliver them. Social contacts in the end called for a code and a king. There must be rules and an umpire in every game. Only by that do men come into the larger liberty of freedom to play.

There was a time when there were no red and green lights at our street intersections. But in a day of swift travel, we have put ourselves under their control. Yet, thereby we have acquired the larger liberty that comes

from driving an automobile instead of a horse and buggy. Our liberty is enlarged by social control.

To how much liberty are we, then, entitled? To just as much as enlarges the liberty of all. If our minority groups in America, clamouring for class privileges, could but get this essential fundamental of democracy. The demands they make on government are violating this fundamental principle and are opening the way for the loss of liberty for us all, including themselves.

It may be said that all this has not been very sermonic. There seems to be little religion in it. I want to close with that which is ultra-religious, and without which all that I have been saying is impossible.

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Liberty cannot endure in any system of society where the Spirit of the Lord is absent.

*"No house can stand, no kingdom can endure
Built on the crumbling walls of self-desire;
Nothing is living stone, nothing is sure
That is not whitened with a social fire."*

Whether it be a democracy, communism, fascism, or what you will—no people can have liberty unless the spirit of goodwill, of honour, of co-operation, of brotherliness, of justice, and of unselfish love prevails. These are godlike graces of the Spirit of the Lord. Unless the Spirit of the Lord be seated on the throne, liberty will disappear. Herein is the great danger to our liberties today. The dictatorships of Russia, Germany, Italy are far, very far, from the Spirit of the Lord. They are motivated by class hatreds, racial antipathies, personal ambitions, national lust for power—by everything except the righteousness that exalteth a nation. A people's

EMPTY THRONES

liberties are not made sure by such compacts, by treaties, by laws, by constitutions, but by the spirit of their life. The issues of political government, like the issues of all life, are out of the heart. Our troubles have not come because the system is wrong but because a serpent has made his nest in human hearts. We do not need a change of scenery. We need a change of heart. A change of scenery cannot cure us. It will be of no avail. Until the imagination and the desires of a people are filled with the Spirit of the Lord, their liberties never are safe. We need not a revolution, but a re-creation.

You remember that after the death of King Uzziah, a young prophet named Isaiah, who had loved his king dearly, wandered one day into the throne room of the temple. As he stood there disconsolate before the empty throne, he had a vision. "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord *sitting upon a throne*, high and lifted up." The empty throne was occupied by the Divine King. And Isaiah went forth in the light of that reality, to "proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of prison doors to them that were bound." "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

What, then, do I mean by that? I mean the lifting up of the imagination and the universe of desire into the godlike. The first principle of the Spirit of the Lord is that "life is more than meat," and that "a man's life does not consist in the abundance of things which he possesses." That cuts squarely across the great motive that is leading men to surrender their liberties today. Sons, whose fathers endured hunger and nakedness, the loss of all things for liberty, have grown so soft, that they will trade their freedom for economic security. They prefer a full stomach to a free soul. The immediate

satisfaction of hunger is the price they pay for the loss of liberty. Of course, it could be shown to these modern Esaus that all this is a delusion, that in the end slaves always are hungry. One must sympathize with hunger. We need not be surprised that men will sell liberty for bread. But it is fatal none the less. The situation that leads them to do it is intolerable.

When, in the midst of a superabundance of the good things of life, millions are in want; when granaries are bursting, and millions do not have bread; when we plough under great fields of cotton, and millions have no clothes; when we pay vast sums to rich landlords to keep them from producing, and hand out a dole to others to keep them from dying; something is happening to endanger our liberties.

Never mind what theory you may have about it! Consider the fact that all this has come to pass because men have not been living in the Spirit of the Lord. They have been greedily selfish; they have not cared what happens to their fellow men. They have not been honest. They have wanted good things for themselves, and to get them they have violated every principle of the Golden Rule and the Law of Love. They have not been loyal to The True, The Good, and The Beautiful. They have been swept, like a crowd in a burning theatre, down to low levels of desire, where the "law of survival" reigns, and where liberty cannot exist.

I want to sound a prophetic word! It is this: Until we all who have anything to do with the economic, social, and political life of the world, elevate our desire and our activity into those lofty levels of life that are one with the Spirit of the Lord, we are facing the loss of all the liberty, which our fathers bought at so dear a price.

I do not see how we can escape tyranny, or build a Golden Age of Freedom on the earth, until we stop dealing with mechanisms, cease depending on programs, and seat the Spirit of the Living God upon the empty throne of life. Until His shadow shelters our ideals, our dreams, our imaginations, our desires, our loyalties, our sense of what is valuable, we can hope for neither "life, liberty nor the pursuit of happiness." If we really want the will of God to be "done on earth as it is in heaven," as we so thoughtlessly pray, we can bring it to pass. Until we are in tune with the Infinite, and in line with that "purpose that through the ages runs," we look in vain for a new heaven and a new earth.

I know the task is hard. But it can be done. The human will, buttressed by the power of God, is omnipotent. Professor William James, in his *Psychology*, reminds us that we ARE and that we accomplish that which we ATTEND to. "Effort of attention," he says, "is the essential phenomenon of the will." Was that what Paul was getting at when he said: "Set your affections on things that are from above"? Precisely! "The strong-willed man," continues Professor James, "is the man who hears the still, small voice unflinchingly." That is it! "He that heareth these words of mine (attendeth to them) and doeth them, I will liken him to a man that built his house upon a rock."

Suppose the universal application of the godlike mind, the godlike ideal, the godlike activity, does seem impossible in this cock-eyed world of ours. The impossible always is being done.

There was a little company of men in the first century, of whom a historian of their day said: "These are they that have tasted the powers of the age to come." They

faced the identical, impossible task confronting Christendom today—the task of making human personalities and human relationships godlike. These men were young men, one scarce eighteen. They did not receive their powers all at once. They grew into it. Power came as it was needed. As they gave themselves more and more to the adventure of trying the impossible, more and more power came. They realized the promise that runs all through Nature, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.”

Their contemporaries, unable to explain their signs and wonders, said: “These men are filled with new wine.” “They are drunk.” But Peter, the spokesman of the band, harking back to a promise of their Master, said: “NO! We are not full of new wine! We are full of a new spirit, even the Spirit of the Lord. This is the secret of our power, our freedom.”

What if there should come into the Church today a company of youth having that spirit! What if they should again attempt the daring adventures of listening to the voice of God, as these early Christians listened! What if they were ready for the martyrdom involved in following where the Voice leads! What if there should come to this sodden age a leaven that really would lift it! What if there should be lights shining upon its darkness! What if there were salt permeating its decay with a living saltiness!

Then the Church would no longer be the feeble, hesitating company of souls it now is. These young spirits would be “turning the world upside down,” as the men of Thessalonica described the first Christians. Then human liberty would be safe. The world would be free. The empty throne would be filled with the Spirit of The

EMPTY THRONES

Lord. The dawn of the Golden Age would be reddening the East.

Eternal Spirit who filleth all, sit Thou upon the empty throne. Above the clamours of earth, beyond our strident passions, over all the thunder of our contentions, let us hear Thy voice of quiet stillness. And hearing, give us wills to follow.

*“ Breathe through the heats of our desire
Thy coolness and Thy balm,
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire:
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still small voice of calm! ”*

VI

ATTITUDES OF THE EDUCATED *

THE Westminster Catechism raises a question that is fundamental: "What is the chief end of man?" Well, what is it? What are we here for, anyway? What is the "Design for Living"?

The hedonist answers, "We are here to be happy." The moralist says: "The end of man is to do his duty." The theologian says: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever."

But when all "our being's ends and aims" have been considered, we shall agree that essential to them all is "self-realization." The ultimate end of life is the development of personality. Human souls are the ultimate units of life. For them exist institutions, customs, laws. To bring personalities up to their highest possibility is the chief end of man. To that end, "schools and the means of education." To that end, all this four years of college life now closing, to that end the years of unfolding life that lie before.

Someone has said that an educated person is one who is "at home in his universe." Whether we are at home in our universe or not, depends on our attitude toward what it has to offer. It is the response we make to what the universe has to offer. It is not the facts we know, it is not the results we achieve, it is the attitude we maintain that determines our development, our happiness, our

* A Baccalaureate Sermon.

usefulness. Educated attitudes may well be the first business of the schools. They determine the development of our personality. What are some of the attitudes of the educated?

1. *The educated attitude will be Altruistic not Individualistic.*

In the long march of the race out of the jungle to the city, the number of people to whom each person is related has steadily multiplied. "It is not good for man to be alone," is the decree of the God of Nature. So man's Creator has gradually widened his social relationships. The home, the clan, the tribe, the nation, the world—step by step it has come to that. No man liveth unto himself. What happens in Timbuctoo, echoes in Kalamazoo. Swift communication has thrown the world together. Whether we like it or not, we have to live neighbour to all the world. Our social outlook must embody all men.

The attitude we take toward that situation is the vital thing. Thrown together as we are into a world neighbourhood, is our attitude hostile or friendly, social or selfish, altruistic or individualistic? The fate of the world, our own fate, hangs on the answer. Let each individual, each group live only to itself, exploiting, fighting the rest of men, and disaster is imminent. Let each, on the other hand, live altruistically, for the good of all, and prosperity is just around the corner. The truly educated man will live altruistically. His educated imagination will enable him to "live in the lives of other men," as Victor Hugo longed to do. There is an old song that goes like this:

*"Had I a thousand lives to live,
Lord, they should all be Thine."*

We DO have a thousand lives to live! One of the very things that distinguishes us from the other animals is our capacity to enter into the experiences of others. So we enlarge our own experience. The great Teacher proposed what has been called The Golden Rule: "As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them." Everybody agrees that here is about the highest level of life ever proposed. But each generation raises the question of its possible achievement. Can we live the Golden Rule? We can live it only as we are able imaginatively to enter into the living experience of others. The key of entry into another life is an imagination educated altruistically.

The greatest undertaking of life is to get ourselves out of the singular into the plural, to create an attitude that is social not self-centered. The instinct for altruism is within us all. If our education does not draw it out of us, all the diplomas and all the degrees in the world are sounding brass and clanging cymbal. Alas for that man who comes out of school an egotist; whose ambitions are centered on himself, who has not learned that the way to life more abundant is to lose himself in the lives of other men.

There was a Person once Who caused men to marvel at the words of grace and truth that fell from His lips; Who possessed most superbly the art of getting into the lives of other men. He was able to enter completely into the mind and heart of men He met—the leper, the publican, the soldier, the scholar, the trader, and the teacher. That is the secret of the wonder of Jesus. He has been able to multiply His life infinitely by entering into the lives of millions of the earth. "Is it not amazing that millions love Him," said Napoleon. No! It is not amaz-

ing. Jesus has millions of friends because He WAS one. He saw life not in a mirror, but through a window, that looked straight into the souls of others. He was the supreme altruist. So Paul could say, "Christ liveth in me." How many people can say that of you? "He lives in me." Here is the supreme glory of an educated man. Through an enriched imagination, through enlarged contact, through wider knowledge of the very ends of life, he is challenged to pass from an individualistic to a socialistic attitude.

That challenge is written deep upon the political and economic experiences of our time. It is sober truth to say that unless we can learn to think in terms of others, we are destined for disaster, economically and politically. We have long been educated by life to see *things* not *faces*, as we go down the street. There are one hundred and twenty million faces in America. How many of them do you see? Those of your own party, your own crowd, your own family? Our great peril is that we shall see only things. It is a tragic situation where men are for themselves and the devil takes the hindmost; where all are for the party and none are for the state; where selfish aims loom large and faces disappear. We have to learn that

*"One man in sorrow sets the whole world in tears.
No man is free while one for freedom fears."*

The educated, then, are summoned to an attitude of social imagination, that shall draw them out of narrow selfish individualism, into universal sympathy and co-operation. There is no other way out of the political and economic chaos in which the world finds itself. Come then, educated young man, young woman, I challenge

you to go out into this troubled world, seeking to multiply yourself in other lives, an apostle of goodwill, co-operation, and loving service for others. So will you achieve self-realization, so will you enter into life in all its fullness.

*"O may you join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence:
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion even more intense.
So shall you join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world."*

2. *The attitude of an educated man is Realistic not Sentimental.*

Our age is strong for realism. The other day I read a volume entitled *Realistic Theology*. Walter Horton, the author, goes hard after the liberal theologians, because he says their faith savours too much of sentiment. They do not face the facts of life. The old theology was stern and rough. God was a Judge, Who held people over the pit of hell and would drop them if they did not repent. Sin was a grim reality, which God hated and good men abhorred. In their reaction from this old-time religion, the liberals went to the opposite extreme. They ceased to be grim and became sentimental. God ceased to be a Judge and became a kind, affectionate Father, Who readily overlooked the sins of men, which were, after all, only lesser good. God was in His heaven and all was right with the world. By an inevitable process of evolution all things were working out for good, and the world was fast approaching the Age of Gold. Everything was lovely, everybody was going to heaven, and Omar's optimism was everywhere:

ATTITUDES OF THE EDUCATED

*"Some there are who tell
Of one who threatens he will toss to hell
The luckless pots he marred in making.
Pish! He's a good fellow and 'twill all be well."*

Now, the realists are telling us that all this romanticism, this optimism, this liberalism does not square with the facts of life, which the world war and the world depression have made real. The world is wilder, fiercer, wickedder than we have believed. Let us quit this easy-going idealism, and face things as they are. That plea runs through every department of life. Our literature reeks with realism. Let us have life as it really is, no matter how nasty, how criminal, how crude. The novel and the drama strain after realism. So does art. A critic in one of our newspapers recently commented that a row of garbage cans, if realistically painted, was every bit as beautiful as a sunset. Music has emancipated itself from the sentimental state represented by "After the Ball," and is offering us reproductions of the barnyard bedlam. "Let us have realism in everything"! "Tell the story, paint the picture, write the biography, according to the facts."

To all of which, let every educated person say, "Amen." Certainly we ought to be realists. Every sham of life should be debunked. It is silly to suppose that humanity can be delivered from its ills by "sugar and spice and everything nice." The religious liberals are wrong. Man does not come to Utopia by paths among the flower beds. There must be catastrophe and convulsion, revolution and re-creation. A healthy realism is a good thing.

The Bible is a most realistic book. It tells the truth—the whole truth. It shows us Noah, after the flood, en-

gaged in a drunken revel with his own daughter. It pictures war in all its hideousness; sin in all its frankness. There is nothing in Juvenal to compare with Paul's description of the vices of the Roman world. Moreover, the first Christians were realists. Their Founder was a realist. Renan is all wrong in his picture of Jesus as a soft sentimental dreamer. He never got that portrait out of the Gospels. Jesus lived the rough, hard life of the streets, and came to His end on a cross before a jeering mob. His followers did not live softly in gardens. They are out in the arena facing lions. They become burning torches in Nero's garden. They are "naked and destitute and afflicted," heroic spirits of whom the world was not worthy. Sentimentalists? They were the mightiest realists the world ever has seen. So I am saying, "We educated people ought to be realists." We know the facts of life. Let us face them as they are.

Take this matter of war. Let us be real about it. The war-makers of earth call the peacemakers idle sentimentalists. "Man is a fighting animal," they say, "and war is a part of his glory and his grandeur. The pacifists are sentimentalists." Not on your life! It is the other way around. The war-makers are the sentimental people. They march by in parades with stirring music, flags, and gay uniforms. They try to trap the common man into a war passion by a lot of romance about how sweet and beautiful it is to die for one's country. They tell you nothing of the grim reality of a modern battlefield, with its vermin and its filth, its rotting corpses, its flies, its blood, its horror and its pain. They never let you in on the reality of war. They show the long line of soldiers going out to battle in panoplied parade. They never show you the parade as it comes back. If you

want to be a realist about war, look over those pictures of the World War battlefields recently published; or go through the insane hospital over at Camp Custer; consider the economic chaos we are in; remember the moral lapse of our times; the loss of liberty to whole peoples; think of the class hatreds and revolutions that vex the peace of earth—and set these things down as the realities of war. This is the “racket” of war. Be patriotic enough, then, to defend your country FROM war and not BY it. That is the realism of war.

Take this matter of drink. A few years ago when repeal was in the air, there was a strong urge for it in the name of liberty, and of the grandeur of youth resisting this temptation in the open, instead of the “speak-easy.” Much sentiment was uttered about saving youth from the “sneaking habit.” That was the sentimental side. What was the reality? Selfish interests wanted to make money out of man’s alcoholic folly. Now, after repeal, drinking again is set before us in the convivial scene where good fellows get together. Our magazines are filled with sentimental advertising, glorifying the cocktail. Sentiment is being marshalled to make drinking hard liquor “the thing.” There is a beautiful picture in colour, showing the glamour of “moonlight and roses and a glass and a girl in the garden.” But what is the realism of it? Poisoned bodily tissue; weakened moral inhibitions; the death of all that is true and good and beautiful in character; a reckless unsocial attitude that bullies its way over others’ rights—that is the realism of this drinking business.

Remember—a thing to be real does not have to be hard and low and brutal. The sunshine is as real as a sewer. Slums are real, but so are homes. Dreams are as truly

facts as dirt. Ideals are the foundations of achievements. Ideals are as real as facts. When you trade character for cash, you have not traded sentiment for reality. You have traded a higher reality for a lower. It is not just the materialistic things that are real. Man's spiritual life is as real as his physical. His faith is as vital as his food. The poets are supreme realists. Rebecca McCann goes out one evening to drink from the old oaken bucket at the well. She writes of it:

*"I went out to the well one night,
Soft darkness hid all daytime's scars,
I held some water to the light
And drank a dipper full of stars."*

The stars in the dipper were just as real as the water. We do not come to reality by touch alone. We reach it by the magic path of the imagination. The Golden Rule and the Law of Love are the supreme laws of human relationship. The people who try to enthrone them are not wishful dreamers. They are supreme realists. Every step in human progress had been initiated as someone's dream. We educated men, then, ought to be enough of realists to "dream dreams and see visions," of that which is highest.

3. *The attitude of an educated man will be Prophetic and not Academic.*

The tendency of education is to develop the spirit of critical observation. This creates an aloofness from the struggles of life. That attitude we call academic. It sits in the grandstand and watches others play the game of life. In a consciousness of superior knowledge, it offers suggestions as to how the world's work should be done; but it does nothing. Its interest in the teeming

world is purely intellectual—academic. Quite otherwise is the prophetic attitude. It is all for action. It lives down on earth among the people. It takes to heart the griefs, the losses, the perplexities, the mistakes of men. It is with them in their struggle, confident, hopeful in the worth of life, and in the power of God and man together to create a new heaven and a new earth.

Last summer a motor bus was going from Rochester to Buffalo. Along the way an elderly woman stopped it and asked the driver if he were going to Buffalo. "Yes," he replied, "hurry and get aboard." "Oh, I am not going to Buffalo," she answered, "I just wanted to say that you have a fine day for your trip." That is the academic attitude. It has much to say, but it is not going anywhere. I covet for you the prophetic as against the academic attitude.

Here is the way to happiness, if you are a hedonist. Bruce Curry, in a recent book, remarks on the almost universal pessimism of the educated classes of America, especially professors and students in our colleges. Always in time of social chaos, the people who merely sit by and study and observe, grow despondent. They see dark situations from their academic desks. They discern most readily the disintegrating, destructive forces at work. Things DO look bad from that vantage point.

But let one try to do something about it, and he develops straightway a faith that saves him from despair. He discovers forces at work that the academic mind never sees. There is more good in people, and there are more good people than he had supposed. The hard-boiled are blind to visions that are commonplace to the half-baked. You have to be a prophet and not a cynic to find the truth that makes you free and glad. If you

want to be miserable, oh young heart, view this passing pageant with academic eyes. If you want to be happy, have the hopeful heart of a prophet. Believe that the best is yet to be, and with God's help try to make it so. Get out of the grandstand into the game.

"Life's a long headache on a noisy street," says one of John Masefield's characters. Lord Byron called it "a weariness, a fever, and a fret." Everywhere we see men disillusioned, with nothing to build upon, save what Bertrand Russell calls "unyielding despair." Henley in "Invictus" cries out of a night "black as the pit from pole to pole,

*"Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years,
Finds and shall find me unafraid."*

His is the salutation of despair. It is a bragging, futilitarian pessimism, which is answered by Grace Wilkinson, in "Beyond the Spectrum." She too looks out into a dark world, but she is not apart from it all, and she has prophetic faith to see beyond its gloom invisible lights the spectrum does not reveal. She also speaks to her soul:

*"We cannot look beyond
The spectrum's mystic bar,
Beyond the violet light
Yea, other lights there are,
And waves that touch us not,
Voyaging far.*

*Here in the clammy dark
We dig as dwarfs for coal,
Yet One Mind fashioned it
And us, a luminous whole:
As lastly, thou shalt see,
Thou, O my soul!"*

The contrast is as between the prophetic and the academic attitude. One makes the cynic, the other the seer.

4. *We come finally to this: We develop the glory of the altruistic, the realistic, the prophetic attitude, when our attitude is Receptive not Assertive.*

Let me quote Bertrand Russell again. He is talking about the difficulty of quenching the selfish spirit in the heart of a child. He has tried everything and he says: "I have come to the conclusion that the unselfish spirit is something received, not made." Jesus would quite agree with that observation. The greatest riches that come to us are not the products of assertive activity but of quiet receptivity. You cannot force the sunlight. You cannot force a friendship. In the summer time with a friend I spend many hours with a sailboat in the northern lakes. We have found that the wind bloweth where it will, as Jesus said. It is not always with us. So we have to accommodate ourselves to it and learn the art of tacking. We cannot force it. We only can receive it and accommodate ourselves to it. So we reach our goal. The rich, the happy, the triumphant life finds its treasures not by asserting itself and greedily saying, "The world owes me this. I'll get mine while the getting is good." After all the meek do inherit the earth. The mind that is open, the heart that is receptive always are full. I am not saying that they have great possessions. I am saying that a receptive life is full—full of what makes life really rich—hopes, friendships, happiness, peace.

Of course, all this cuts squarely across the dominating philosophy of our times. Assertive egotism is the attitude of men and of nations. But if history has any lesson, it is that this attitude is the way of death. Whereas,

it is strong in its testimony that he that loseth his life shall find it. William James once wrote:

"There is a state of mind, in which the will to assert ourselves has been displaced by a willingness to close our mouths, and be as nothing in the floods and waterspouts of God. . . . The time for tension is over and that for happy relaxation, for calm deep breathing, for an external present with no discordant future to be anxious about, has arrived."

That time HAS arrived for every heart that goes out into the world, humbly receptive to what God and life bring, losing self in a Love that is divine. After all, the way into life is by surrender, dedication. They who have lived best, found it so. Jesus is saying, "Not I, but the Father in me." Lincoln is saying, "I have not shaped events; events have shaped me."

Behind all that seems to be a "sorry scheme of things entire," there is a Wisdom, a Love, a Life, that is eternally bringing out of dissonance and discord a beautiful symphony. To be in tune with the Infinite, to hold a heart receptive to His inflow, is to enter into life.

There was a blind Scottish poet who wrote once:

*"O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee.
I give Thee back the life I owe,"*

Why, George Matheson, do you give it back?

*"That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be."*

Almighty God, we who are going out into life want to know its fullness. We want to get the most out of it.

We want to find happiness. We want power to live. O, give us understanding hearts and put a right spirit within us. Make us altruists, realists, prophets, surrendered sons of God. Amen.

VII

THE KINGDOM TARRIES

I WOULD sound a note of prophecy. For inspiration I turn to a prophet of the past. I am standing within the gates of old Jerusalem. Three centuries since the days of Solomon the Magnificent have trailed their garments of light and darkness across the land. The splendour, of which Sheba declared the half had not been told, has faded into distance and into dream. The gates of the temple are closed. On every hilltop heathen altars send their smoke heavenward.

The boy king, Ahaz, is on the throne. It is autumn, the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. But I do not see the streets filled with glad throngs singing: "The Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad." I am told that beyond the city walls the land lies desolate. Thorns and briars and heaps of stone have replaced gardens on terraced hillsides. Hunger and want are everywhere. A race of shepherds and herdsmen is so reduced that he is held to be rich who has a cow and two sheep. Even now, a foreign foe is hammering at the city gates. It seems that the star of Judah is about to set forever. The pall of night settles over a hopeless and desolate people.

But, through it all, one figure moves poised and serene. It is Isaiah, the prophet. Standing in the deserted temple one day he had seen the Lord, high and lifted up;

and in the light of that vision he had become the prophet of a BETTER DAY. A prophet is no mere predictor of events. He is a man "who speaks for God." It is his business to paint upon the skies of his own day ideals and visions of the future. Of their full significance he himself may not be aware; but having seen them, he hangs them like crowns in the gallery of time, for whosoever will to come and take. Isaiah, moving in the twilight shadows of Judah, has a vision of a new and perfected kingdom—a holy and happy millennium for his people.

In one way and another all prophets and seers of time have had it. Plato pictured it as a New Republic; the Romans called it the Age of Gold; Thomas More dreamed of it as Utopia; all through the Bible the thought is of a New Jerusalem, a Kingdom of Heaven, a Millennium.

*" St. John beheld it as a great white throne
Above the ages, wondrous and afar;
Mazzini heard it as a bugle blown,
And Shelley saw it as a steadfast star."*

Our Pilgrim fathers, when they came sailing up to these shores out of the Infinite, had this as their dream. The fathers of our Church a hundred years ago, facing the rigours of this wilderness peninsula, were moved by the vision of a new age against the sky. They, like the disciples of the first century, were looking for a new heaven and a new earth. They set up the Church here in the heart of the forest, that it might be an island of light to flood the coming years with the glow of a new day.

Sometimes it has seemed as if that day were almost here. Way back in 1876, at the Centennial Celebration of the nation's birth, the then pastor of this church

thanked God that at last the perfect nation had come in this republic, and that our civilization was so fully a "replica of the pattern in the mount!"

I wonder what is that dream men are always cherishing, and so often failing to realize? What were they dreaming, who toiled to found the church of this commonwealth a hundred years ago? I think they were carrying on the vision that Isaiah had foretold in Jerusalem, long, long ago. All the hopes men have held of the Age of Gold have been much the same. They have envisioned a certain situation where, in their personal being and in their social relationships, men would possess life to the full. Nowhere is there a better summation of it than Isaiah gave to the people of his day.

1. *He saw it as a Day of Plenty.*

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. . . . And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water."

No kingdom can be perfect where poverty and want abound. Isaiah, seeing on the one hand the debasing luxury of the rich, and, on the other, the degrading poverty of the poor, cried, "This is not your rest, my people. A day is coming when the deserts will laugh with fruitfulness, and there will be bread enough and to spare."

I need not remind you how, down the centuries, God has done His part to make this vision real. He has filled the mountains and the valleys and the seven seas with vast abundance. He has endowed His human family with productive genius, until the world is rich beyond the dream of Isaiah or any other prophet of the Golden Age.

And yet this day half the world is starving. The deep undertone of all complaint is hunger. Millions live just above the necessities of bare existence. Luxury and want live side by side among us. There is an ever-widening gulf between. Granaries are full and people are starving in the same city. The Kingdom of Plenty for the mass of men is long delayed.

2. *It was to be a Kingdom of Peace.*

"Unto us a child is born . . . and his name shall be called The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. . . . And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up the sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

In the fullness of time the child came, heralded as the bringer of peace and goodwill to men. History knows Him as The Prince of Peace. Goodwill and brotherly love were the heart and soul of all His "good news." He reached up and took the crown Isaiah had hung up, and placed it on His own head. And, for all who have followed Him through the centuries, there has come calm upon the troubled sea of life. And yet the vision tarries! Indeed, the first three decades of the twentieth century have been the bloodiest in all history. Almost three-quarters of the income of the nations is going to support war. There are more men under arms than ever before in human history. The earth is sown with dragons' teeth. The trumpets and the drums of Mars fill the air. We cry, "Peace, peace," but there is no peace.

3. *The day to come was to be also a Day of Liberty.*

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because

he hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the poor; liberty to captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

The march of civilization's legions has been to the sound of clanging chains. The mightiest cry that goes up from human lips is the cry for freedom. Above the lash of taskmasters, the voice of oppressed peoples has always been heard calling, "How long, O Lord, how long!" The quickened eye of the prophet foresees a day when all men shall be free. If he could have followed his vision, he would have seen "Christ's men" of the first century going out into that enslaved Roman world, to strike the chains from millions of bondmen. He would have seen them fighting in the bogs of Holland, the moors of England, the mountains of Switzerland, the forests of America, and the fields of France, that men might be free.

Yet the day of liberty is long delayed. Today more men are in bondage than ever. I am not thinking merely of the human chattels, nor of the dictatorships that have risen to enslave men, bad as they are. Occasionally someone says to me, "What we need in America is a dictator." I cannot understand this careless attitude men have as to their liberties. I cannot fathom their willingness to trade their freedom for mere economic security. Surely they forget what their liberties have cost. I am not thinking of political bondage merely. I am thinking of the vast mass of men who are living under the bondage of FEAR—economic fear. I am thinking of the tyranny under which this mechanical age has placed its people. What man is there who really knows "the freedom wherewith Christ came to set us free"? We know we do not have it. The Day of Liberty tarries.

4. *The day was to be a Day of Righteousness.*

"There shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse. And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him. Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins. He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, but with righteousness shall he judge the poor."

In the fullness of time Jesus came, calling men to righteousness and saying, "He that would ascend with me the hill of the Lord must have clean hands and a pure heart." The theme of all He taught and all He wrought was righteousness. It is the fundamental virtue to any Age of Gold. The thought of it always has gripped the world. But alas! the reality of it! It is not here. The moral life of men slips down the ladder, rung by rung. What great injustices our age brings forth! How does man's inhumanity to man stain all human relationships! The righteousness that exalteth nations does not cover the earth.

And why not? Why is this dream of our fathers of an Age of Gold, wherein peace and plenty and liberty and justice dwell, so long delayed? Surely it is not because we lack a vision of it. That never was more clear than now. Nor is it because we have lost our hunger for it. There is no keener hunger in human hearts. Rather is it because we have lost sight of the forces that insure its coming.

We have many false conceptions of the conditions attending its reality.

First, concerning the nature of the citizen himself. I have a little book on modern communism. There are many very attractive things about this philosophy of life. But I find its fundamental weakness in the oft-repeated

statement of the book, "It is not human nature to do wrong." It is assumed that the heart of man is naturally good; that the ills and evils that delay the better day are a result of the system under which we live. Change the system, and the natural goodness of the human heart will assert itself in a moral and social Utopia. This belief prevails in other faiths than communism. Indeed, the dominant social theory is that progress toward a better day is inevitable; that by making a few minor adjustments in the scheme of things, man, the product of an age-long evolution, will go on forever rising toward a perfect day. Give him the right physical environment and man will become a God. This false understanding of the doctrine of evolution, this belief in inevitable human progress, is delaying the Kingdom.

Study the Bible that the race has writ, and you will find confirmation of the word of The Book, that "the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." The perfect kingdom tarries not because the system is wrong but because a serpent has made his nest in human hearts. What we need is not a change of scenery but a cure—not a revolution but a re-creation. Not human surroundings but human selfishness is the great enemy.

"It is an excellent foppery of this world," says Edmund in *King Lear*, "that we make guilty of our disorders, the sun, the moon, the stars." He was referring to the long since exploded science of astrology. I do not think any man would say that the ills of our time are with us because we were born under an unlucky star. But there are those who firmly believe that this drama of life is poorly played, just because the setting of the stage is wrong. Change the scenery, and these stuttering,

stumbling actors will become as graceful as queens and as eloquent as archangels.

If you will study carefully the ills we bear, you are sure to paraphrase the word of Cassius to Brutus: "The fault is not in our scene but in ourselves that we are underlings."

To mention just one illustration from our contemporary experience. The dry farmer of the West probably is our most outstanding example of misfortune today. If you were to choose one man who is a victim of hard luck, it would be he. Depression and drouth have done their worst for him. Probably he comes nearest to being a victim of circumstance, among all depressed people. But can he attribute his fate to circumstance alone? It is known that from the beginning he has been able to cultivate his dry land and raise crops upon it, because of resources of hidden moisture, stored deep in the subsoil, and in infrequent ponds on lower levels. His margin of safety lay in that. During the war he vastly increased his acreage to meet the emergency. He cultivated eleven million acres in 1919. In the ten years that followed, under all the laws of economics and by all the influence of government, he should have reduced his acreage vastly. The acreage for the whole country was reduced during that period thirty-one per cent. Instead, the dry farmer increased his acreage seventy-three per cent., so that in 1929 he was using nineteen million acres. To increase his cultivation he drained the ponds, he drew heavily upon the stored-up moisture in the subsoil, and increased his product until the market was saturated, and prices dropped to a point below the cost of production. He used his surplus until nothing was left to meet the emergency of drouth.

It is the old human element, not the scenery, that has created his plight. Trace out the whole course of our economic distress, analyze each alleged cause of the depression, and there is no question but that selfish acquisitiveness is at the bottom of most that we endure. No doubt we have made a Century of Progress. But it has been in mechanics, not men.

*"Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay;
Princes and lords may flourish or they fade—
A breath can make them, as a breath hath made.
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed can never be supplied."*

We have not realized that. We have been measuring progress by horsepower, not by character. Stuart Chase in one of his books says: "From our brains have sprung a billion horses now running wild, and almost certain sooner or later to run amuck. Where are the riders with their whirling ropes, where are the light-hearted youths to mount, to be thrown, and rising, to mount again?" We do not have them. We have not seen the truth of that old platitude that "the soul of all betterment is the betterment of the soul"; that "a redeemed world must first of all be a world of redeemed men." That is why society has broken down, and the Kingdom tarries.

There are other reasons. Our age fails to apprehend the very purpose for which life itself is given. Ask almost any man why he does this or that, and his answer will be, "I want to be happy." We are a race of hedonists. Vast multitudes of people have no other purpose than to eat, drink, and be merry. We are in the midst of a revival of paganism, as real as any revival of the past. True, there is no Julian scoffing at the Christian

God; there are no scholastics doting on the glories of a rediscovered past. But there is a revival of the spirit of paganism—the spirit that looks upon the world as a playground, and life as a playspell. Pan plays his pipes by the river's brim, and Aphrodite beckons with her seductive glances from every grove. The glamour is on the sensual. Millions are declaring for their "right to be happy," and by that they mean the right to make their being's end and aim the enjoyment of the material wonders the scientist and the inventor have brought us.

Over whole areas of human life, the Christian ideal that life is a workshop, and that we have a character to achieve, a work to do in building a nobler society is practically repudiated. George Jean Nathan wrote not long ago:

"The great problems of the world do not in the slightest concern me. If all the Armenians were killed tomorrow, and half the Russians were to starve to death the next day, it would not matter to me in the least. What alone concerns me is myself. For all I care a hoot, the rest of the world can go to hell with today's sunset."

Not all people are as honest as that, but that is the way vast multitudes live and feel. The Kingdom tarries because our world is pagan in spirit. It is sensual; it is selfish. The spiritual, the sacrificial, is in the discard. We have not learned what Carlyle says: "The only happiness a brave man troubles himself with asking much about, is the happiness of getting his work done." Our age has missed the very purpose for which life is given. The Kingdom tarries.

Again, the Kingdom tarries because of a false view of

the way it is to come. The distinguishing social characteristic of our time is that the individual is submerged in the society to which he belongs. We are members, not of one another, but of a corporation. That is the social theory of government just now. It reaches its extreme in Russia, in Germany, in Italy. The individual is merely a unit in an organism. The politics of America tends that way. Expanded industry has submerged personality quite completely. Class loyalties have obliterated the personal element in social organization. This "rugged individual" who made our civilization, as Will Rogers says, "ain't rugged any more and ain't even an individual."

So the trend of our times is toward a corporate salvation. We are wild with a collective delirium issuing in communism and fascism. It is thought that to create a new heaven and a new earth, legislation, manipulation are all you need. Society can be saved in one mighty swoop, much as the Jesuits used to baptize whole throngs by sprinkling holy water into the crowd. But the Kingdom of Heaven does not come that easily. Quite probably a New Deal is necessary, and a redistribution of the cards will help. No man may despise any new social reorganization. But so long as the players refuse to play the game; so long as they hold a fifth ace up their sleeve, no expedient of mass-uplift ever will succeed.

The way of the Kingdom is a way of love. A corporation cannot love. It can make treaties and formulate codes. But love is the fulfilling of every code and treaty. It is the dynamic without which no social advance can be made. You can merge men for certain temporal purposes, but you cannot merge souls. You cannot fix responsibility on a corporation. The only responsibility to

which the world ever has responded is personal responsibility. The Kingdom of Heaven does not come by observation, but by all that transpires in the heart of the race. Out of the heart are the issues of life.

Once more, the Kingdom tarries because of the universal failure of those who possess it, to use the force that will bring it in. There is a company in whose hands lie the unlimited resources of the Golden Age. All power has been committed unto them in heaven and on earth. But they are not using it. They are not working their dynamics. They are not standing against the tides of time. Dr. Halford Luccock reminds us that on the steeples of New England churches they used to place a weather vane. He thinks that is a more expressive symbol for many modern churches than a cross.

It is written of the first century Christians: "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." They are not writing that of us. We are quite at ease in Zion. People are not standing expectant, wondering what amazing thing we are going to do next. Far back in the second century Cyprian of Carthage wrote to Donatus:

"This is a cheerful world as I see it from my garden, under the shadow of my vines. But if I should ascend some lofty place and look abroad, you well know what I would see: brigands on the highways, pirates on the seas, armies fighting, cities burning, in amphitheatres men murdered to please applauding crowds; selfishness and cruelty and despair under all roofs. But in the midst of it I have found a quiet people, withdrawn from it all, living apart in peace. They are the Christians, Donatus, and I am one of them."

Is OUR view the garden view of life? Is our religion a sweet idyl of lotus eating? Are we playing in fragrant gardens, while the world is burning up? Then there is but one thing to do—to return to Jesus and His way, to lay hold on Him as the mighty force of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. That is what He is! That is the way the Kingdom will come. In Him is the force that alone can drive out the wrongs that delay its coming; that can reconstruct and rebuild human lives and human relationships into enduring reality.

You remember in Browning's "Saul," how the shepherd boy, David, comes at Abner's request to try to drive away with harp and song the madness from the soul of King Saul. He enters Saul's darkened tent, where the king sits in melancholy. What song will drive the shadows from the heart of his king? He sings first the song of Nature, "the quails on the cornfield, the sheep in the pasture, the jerboa a-musing outside his sand house." There is no response.

Then he sings of the "wild joys of living"; the chase; the loves, the hopes, the successes of life. The king is unmoved. He rises higher to sing of the longing to achieve, the dream of immortality. The king's madness remains. Then! The song of the Kingdom:

*" 'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for!
my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul,
it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man
like to me.
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever; a Hand
like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee!
See the Christ stand! "*

Then Saul awakes. His soul is stirred. He is saved. Here is the secret of our redemption. Earth becomes heaven, when the life of God is incarnated in human life. That was why Jesus came. He came to incarnate the life of God. And that is what, by His word, His life, His power, He summons us to do. I think one of the best definitions of religion I have seen is this: "Religion is a conscious effort on the part of man to enter into the life of God."

Here Jesus is supreme. He did it! Completely! Fully! Here is His meaning to an age like ours. He empowers us to do it. When the life of God is incarnate in human character and in human relationships, the Kingdom will be here. Why do we not make that our supreme calling? We have no calling to prove Christ's virgin birth. Our task is to incarnate His holy life. Religion is not an argument. It is an art—the art of living a Christlike life.

When God and man become fellow-workers in that art, the Kingdom will appear. That is why Jesus is here—to help us live the life of God. That is why, a long century ago, our fathers founded His Church in this commonwealth. The years have brought many changes. Then, the frontier was in the wilderness. Now it is in the village and the city. Then the frontier was geographical; now it is moral. A great historian has said that "the permanency of any empire is measured by its ability to master its frontiers." It was when Rome settled down to a life of ease at home and neglected to hold her far-flung frontier that the Empire collapsed.

Our fathers mastered their frontier with the help of God, Who "was their Rock, their Fortress, and their Might; their Lord, their Captain in the well-fought

fight." Will we achieve a like mastery of our frontier and make the Kingdom of Heaven an enduring reality? It all depends on our loyalty to Him and to His great task of making men and society Christlike. For,

*"When He comes to a world gone wrong,
He will rebuild its beauty with a song.
... And men will sit down at His sacred feet,
And He will say, the King—
'Come let us live the poetry we sing.'
And these, His burning words, will break the ban—
Words that will grow to be, on continent, on sea,
The rallying cry of man."¹*

I stood one evening on the southern rim of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. Before me stretched one of the wildest scenes Nature knows. Here in ages past the Titan forces of nature have struggled for the mastery. Erosion and inertia have battled here and they have left behind an indescribable and chaotic ruin. But as the setting sun played on granite wall and jagged pillar, a soft beauty enveloped all. It was as if I stood amid the minarets and towers of the very city of God. I could but exclaim, "What hath God wrought?"

Still He works. Not alone on barren rocks which will some day be lost in the crumbling of ages, but upon souls, human souls, scarred by fires of passion, torn by Titans of evil. Still He works on a kingdom rent and chaotic, but sublime even in its wreckage. And when, at last, time's evening glow plays over the scene where today we toil and sacrifice, that which now is scarred and torn will catch the lustre of jasper and of pearl. Then what has been whispered from ear to ear will be shouted from the housetops: "The Kingdom of God is with men." In

¹ Edwin Markham, "The Desire of Nations."

that hour when dreams come true, it will be pleasing to remember that we have played our part, however small, in bringing down to men the Paradise of God.

Captain of our salvation, Come! We bring to Thee the fragrant loyalty of hearts that are yet in bud and blade. "True-hearted, whole-hearted, Saviour all-glorious, Take Thy great power and reign there alone, Over our wills and affections victorious, Freely surrendered and wholly Thine own." Through us may Thy kingdom come. Hasten through us the day of Thine appearing. Amen.

VIII

RELIGION IS A FIRE!

BY far the longest step in the advance of the race was taken that day when man discovered how to build a fire. One anthropologist has defined man as "an animal that knows how to build a fire." No other animal can do it. It is an achievement that separates us from the beast.

Primitive stories are full of this theme. Æschylus recounts the most notable of them in his tragedy. Prometheus, a mortal, has invaded the abode of the gods and brought fire down to men. He is punished for his irreverence by being chained to a lofty rock, where the birds of the air continually pluck at his vitals. But he is honoured by humans, and the tragedy closes with a chorus of young men insolently chanting their independence of the gods. They have made a scientific discovery and no longer need divine help.

With fire playing so great a part in the experience of their life, primitive men early became fire-worshippers. The eyes of the primitives were turned in two directions. They looked to the fertile earth beneath them, and they became worshippers of the forces of fertility. Therefrom grew up all the abominations of the sex-religions. The spade of the archæologist has but recently unearthed many of these foul practices from the ashes of Ur of Chaldea. That is why Abram is leaving Ur to seek a better country. For Abram belonged to another cult—

the fire-worshippers. They looked aloft to the flaming heavens, and found them declaring the glory of God, and showing His handiwork. They developed a larger spirituality, a nobler morality from such a faith. So Abram, when he comes to Canaan, erects an altar and builds a fire thereon, as all his fire-worshipping ancestors had done. The Wise Men of the New Testament story belonged to this cult, and in the fullness of time they come seeking a new King in Judah, "for we have seen his star in the East."

But quite apart from its symbolism, religion always has been a fire in the earth. It has brought a warmth of love. It has been a dynamic of advance. It has illumined spiritual darkness. When civilization enters a process of decay, it is because the fire that warms, the energy that invigorates, the light that illumines, is dying out. A civilization that neglects its altar fires is soon upon that slippery chute that leads to the "everlasting bonfire."

With this in view we discern the deeper meaning of Professor Moffatt's translation of the text, "Maintain the spiritual glow" (Romans 12: 11). Keep the fire burning! That is not easy in our day. We are in the midst of a revival of paganism, and that spirit is quenching the spiritual glow. Over vast areas of life, in multitudes of human hearts, "enthusiasm" (fire inside) has become extinct. The divine no longer warms, energizes, illumines the soul. "Our peril," says Newton Baker, "is not a dearth of material things. It is that the very richness of our glittering civilization shall ruin character and personal integrity, until the fires that refine the material shall be quenched."

I wonder why it is that religion, for so many people,

has become an extinct fire? Searching the literature of our times, I find, among others, this answer: "It is because science has disproved God. What we had thought was the light of the world is a St. Elmo's fire. How can there be a Person in all this vastness of starry universe, living under the reign of law, Who can care for us tiny creatures, crawling on this speck of star-dust, in a far-off, darkened corner of it?"

*"We are no other than a moving row,
Of magic shadow-shapes that come and go."*

The Reality cannot be concerned about the shadow, nor the Infinite care for the infinitesimal. Even if there be a God, His creature can have no relationship with Him.

I do not believe that there are many who have lost their religion by this reasoning. It is not that science has disproved God. It has crowded Him out. Men do not feel the need of Him. "Life is full of a number of things." Last autumn I sent a questionnaire to several disinterested people of my church. The one explanation they all gave for their loss of interest in religion was expressed forcibly by one of them: "I have everything I want without religion. Why should I take on the extra burden of attending to it! Let those that feel the need of it, support it." That is what millions say: "Science has filled our lives to overflowing with the means of satisfaction. We have made scientific discoveries and like the fire-builders of old, we can sing a song of independence of the gods."

There is a deeper reason still for the fading of the spiritual glow. Men want to live in a low universe of desire! We are not ready to admit that, for it is a confession of weakness. But it is true! Science WILL get

us all we want, if all we want is toys. Millions of men stop right there. They never feel the impulse to soar and reach immortal joys. If one can have his car, a radio, a fine house, good food, and money for his smokes and drinks; if he can have his comforts assured and his passions satisfied apart from it, why bother about religion? Millions live in that low universe of desire. They set no store in the ideals, the motives, the joys of a religious life.

With all our advance in the knowledge of Nature's laws, and with all our skill in using them for creative wonders, our wisdom to use has not kept pace with our ability to create. We have vastly improved the means to a more abundant life, but we have not elevated the objective of it. The swift means of communication and of travel, provided by the automobile, the airplane, and the radio, drawing the world into a neighbourhood, have not eventuated a world brotherhood. Instead, they become the agents of destruction on battlefields. Professor Millikan reminds us in a recent magazine article that our progress is not measured by how far we have travelled the past year, nor how fast the wheels have turned, but "have we grown in mental, moral, and spiritual stature; have we improved in knowledge, understanding and purpose."

A few years ago Sir Oliver Lodge was lecturing to a class on atomic energy. He reminded them of the vast reservoir of power lying in the dust beneath our feet, waiting to be loosed. "But," he said, "I pray that it may never be released until the time when we know how wisely to handle it." The same wish might have been expressed over the invention and discovery of the scientist. The printing press, the motion picture, the countless

applications of physics and chemistry, the improvement in business technique—how full of promise for a better world! Yet how often ministering to evil or to trivial ends.

Mark Twain has a story of "The Prince and the Pauper." A prince about to become a king has grown unspeakably tired of the life of his court. One day, wandering in the palace grounds, he falls in with a beggar boy of his own age. Youth knows no class, and the two begin to tell each other of their mutual woes. Finally, the prince suggests that they change garments; that he shall take the pauper's place in the free life of the streets, while the pauper boy shall become the prince in the palace. Since they are as near alike as two peas, the change will not be discovered. A few days pass and the courtiers note strange conduct in the life of their prince. He does the most unusual things! One day the Great Seal of the kingdom is missed, and search where they will, they cannot find it. Finally, the prince is called. Does he know anything about the Great Seal? "You mean," he says, "that square thing with a handle on it? I'll get it for you." To the amazement of everyone he returns and lays it on the table. "What were you doing with it?" the Prime Minister asks. "I was using it to crack nuts with," the prince nonchalantly replies. Human beings are putting their lives to uses less than that. Born to be sons of God, revealing the image and likeness of the Divine, building a Christlike character, serving their race, they are playing at the game of life, like pagans, using the divine seal upon them "to crack nuts with."

In summer we have a neighbour up on Lake Charlevoix, who has built his home back in the woods behind a sandy beach. A spring rises beside his cabin and flows down

over the sand in many tiny rivulets into the lake. When the wind is in the south, the waves wash up the sand and close these tiny streams. All day long this man, in his bathing suit, will be out there opening the stopped-up places, to let the water out into the lake. Some of his neighbours think this is a trivial occupation for a big business man from Cleveland. But he contends that there is just as much sense as there is in chasing a white ball over a meadow or dragging a wiggling worm behind a boat. He is on his vacation! Out there in the sun and wind he is building up energy of body and mind, so vitally needed by a business man in these trying days. Alas! How many there are who make their vacation a vocation! In the fields of destiny, the low descending sun views by their hands no worthy action done. They live in a low universe of desire. That is why the fires burn low on spiritual altars. The spiritual glow has faded out of life. The glamour is on the sensual.

What can we do about it? "Maintain the spiritual glow." What do we mean by that? Not that we shall be more pious, in that false view of Christ and of Christian living, lamented by Swinburne, when he exclaimed, "Oh, pale Galilean, the world has grown grey with thy breath." Not excitement! Not "tongues" or other wild phenomena! "I had rather speak five words with my understanding than ten thousand in a tongue." Paul knew what he was talking about. These things are not spirituality.

Dr. Goodspeed has given us great insight into Paul's text, "He that is spiritual judgeth all things," by translating it, "The spiritual man is alive to true values." Here is our failure. We do not sense what is truly valu-

able. How deeply this text strikes at the root of our trouble!

The fruits of the Spirit are: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, meekness, faithfulness, self-control," and all else that Jesus brought forth on that day, when, "going up into a mountain he opened his mouth and taught them." How these things cut squarely across our popular paganism! Yet these are of supreme value. They are the true objectives of all human activity, whatever it be. The spiritual man is alive to true values. He is the man who knows the worth of these fruits. If we would maintain the spiritual glow, we shall have to be alive to what is valuable, and not "have our treasure in earthen vessels."

All this will mean to us what it meant to the Christians of the first century. It will mean making the great adventure of being Christians in a pagan world. It is a challenge to every one of us to "hazard our life" for the highest, and to live the life of Christ in a Christless world. It is a challenge to an adventure just as real as theirs. **IT CAN BE DONE!**

There are just a few practical suggestions I would make.

Let us be sure, first of all, that we really want to maintain the spiritual glow. For we shall have to keep it burning in ourselves, ere we can maintain it in our world. Does it really mean enough to us to make the effort, the sacrifice involved in its realization? If we are sure, then there are some very simple means of its attainment.

We shall have to rid our lives of everything that quenches the fires of the Spirit and destroys our sense of true values. What this may mean each one alone can determine. None else may speak. We are to study our-

selves and then deliberately hold our lives to their own highest possible level. We must get rid of everything that quenches the spiritual glow.

Again we need to repeat over and over these processes whereby the fire is kept alive, and true values are held in their right perspective. This is in line with what every psychologist is urging in the formation of new habits.

Perhaps we need to be more alone with God. "The world is too much with us." We need oftener to draw aside and hear a voice of quiet stillness saying, "Be still and know that I am God."

Then, there are what the old churchmen called the "means of grace." Public worship for one thing. I do not think any man can forsake the altar and maintain the spiritual glow. The Life that was altogether lovely began early to frequent the temple. To His complaining parents, when He was lost, He said: "Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" Years slip by and again it is written: "Jesus as his custom was, went into the synagogue on the sabbath day." I wonder if there was not a vital connection between this habitual worship of Jesus and the wonder of the glow of His life.

There is also prayer. Prayer is not saying words. Prayer is an attitude. It is a psychological state by which God enters our life. When I go out to my summer cottage after the winter, there is a musty smell as I enter. The air is dead and dusty. I do not have to go out and beg the wind and sunshine to come in and cleanse the place. All I have to do is open the doors and windows, and they will come rushing in to fill the place with the lovely freshness and glow of spring. In all His fullness God waits just outside our lives eager to come in.

Prayer is opening the doors and windows to admit Him. Prayer is a state of being that practices the presence of God. It is a psychological situation within us, whereby the flame on our heart's altar is fed with the divine fire that is at the heart of God.

And last of all there is dedication. No one can hope to maintain the spiritual glow, who does not enter into the sacrificial. Our bodies are kept alive by fires within that burn up the starch and sugar we take into them, turning them into living energy. Sacrifice is the fire that transmutes human experience into spiritual flame. No man can keep the fire alive in his life, who has not erected therein an altar of sacrifice.

You remember in *The Merchant of Venice*, the Prince of Morocco is standing before the three caskets in Portia's chamber. He must choose one and receive the lot decreed within. One holds the blessing of Portia's hand. Thus he muses:

*"The first, of gold, who this inscription bears,
'Who chooseth me shall get what many men desire.'
The second, silver, which this promise carries
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'"*

Whether we seek the blessing of some fair Portia's hand or a renewal of the spiritual fires in our life, he who would have any blessing "must give and hazard all he hath." The flame of God lies in the leaden casket of sacrifice.

Cleansing! Worship! Prayer! Dedication! By these the spiritual glow is maintained. By these is builded up a sense of true values. To maintain the spiritual glow, we shall have to do more than go through the form of

godliness. We shall have to exercise the power thereof. We shall have to bring, as Prometheus did, the fire from God's own altar to the altars of our being.

Just now the world is in deep distress. Men are weary, troubled, disillusioned. Everyone is on a quest for something that will bring happiness back to the heart. We have become a race of hedonists. Every young life is being educated and trained to the thought that "happiness is our being's end and aim." Well, here is the secret of it, my young hearer.

James Lane Allen in one of his novels is defining Happiness. "Happiness," he says, "is a great love, a great trust, and much service." I do not believe the author was thinking of our religion when he so spoke. He just wanted to tell his reader what happiness was, and all unconsciously he hit upon that which is the heart and soul of the religion of Jesus. For, if you were to ask me to define what Christianity is, I could not give a better definition of it than to say, "Christianity is a great love, a great trust, and much service."

Our times present a ringing challenge then, to college men and women, to go forth into a world where fires are burning low, bringing to it a spiritual glow that shall illumine its darkness and warm its cold, baptizing it with the spirit of Christ.

IX

THE FALSE GOAL OF SECURITY

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will make mention of the name of Jehovah our God."—PSALM 20: 7.

THE passion for security is one of the oldest motives of man. It seems to be instinctive. The very growth of civilization centres around it. Back there in the jungle, primitive man built his hut, to shelter his family from the storms and from the beasts. It was his castle of safety. Soon he gathered with others in a group of huts, for human enemies now compelled him to form an alliance with others of his kind, for protection. The clan enlarged to the tribe, and the tribe to the nation, and it came to pass that, as more and more man's life enlarged, more and more he had to enlarge his defenses. Defenses against the enemies of his health, his property, his rights, his morals, and his very life. That is why we have civil law and civilization. It explains the cave-dwelling and the Chinese wall. It explains the navy of England and the army of France. It explains a parliament and a clinic. It explains the schoolhouse and (let us be frank about it) it explains the Temple. For in the beginning the altar was a refuge from the avenger, whither fleeing, man might be safe from his enemy, in days before civil law. So the cry, "Where can security be found?" is age-old.

It has found its expression in significant phrases in almost every land. The Hebrew poet, watching the

armies of world-conquerors from Assyria and Egypt, as they swept across Palestine, in their repeated forays, exclaims, "Some trust in chariots and horses." These were the symbols of security. Ancient peoples held that armed preparedness was the way to national security. They trusted in chariots and horses for their safety.

But this poet saw the futility of it all. He saw these proud militaristic empires falling into dust, under the very weight of their instruments of security. Palestine was the battlefield of the ancient world, as Belgium is of the modern. There the armies of the nations fought it out to bitter death. This Hebrew poet saw them pass, one by one, to ruin. He contrasts their false security with the safety of his own beleaguered land, "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, BUT WE WILL MAKE MENTION OF THE NAME OF JEHOVAH OUR GOD." God—Jehovah is our strength and shield. "Horses and chariots"? Men are still trusting in them for security.

Think of the nations of the world—of our nation. A bill is now before Congress to add \$400,000,000 to the war budget for an enlarged army. Three times that amount has already been furnished the navy. And any number of senators shouted the old urge, "In time of peace, prepare for war," saying that our national security depended upon a show of power against Japan in the Pacific. "Some trust in chariots and horses."

A man of wealth confides to me that he has put in trust a large sum of money for his son, who is just coming of age, so "that he will never have anything to worry about. He is all fixed for life. He never will have to plan or worry about anything." He will be "sitting pretty," amid his chariots and horses.

Here is the whole motive of the commercial life of the past few years. "Safety first"? There was a time when the banks of America carried an abundance of what were called "character loans." A young man whose character was undisputed could go to his banker and borrow money to carry on a business enterprise, solely on the face value of his integrity. Integrity has little face value now, when you want to borrow money. The great word of our money-lending institutions is "collateral." The banks want security. Don't blame the banks. They are a reflection of the times. Nobody is making any great adventures now. Everybody wants security. It is being sought by the devious ways of politics. "Security against all hazards should be the responsibility of government," is the sub-title of a recent magazine article. The Communist would destroy all existing governments to insure security; the politician on the other hand demands that the government be upheld in everything, that we may get security. The corporation head complains that if the government will but let him alone, he will be able to provide security for all his protégés, and people generally by millions are signing petitions for all sorts of panaceas, designed to create universal security.

This hunger for security may well draw forth the sympathies of any human heart. The old securities have broken down. Things in which men once trusted have failed them. The whole of life is topsy-turvy. A few years ago the common people had invested their savings in pieces of paper, which were promises made by individuals and corporations to pay interest, and at a given time to restore the principal. We called them stocks and bonds instead of chariots and horses, but they were

the same thing. We called them, strangely enough, "gilt-edged securities." There was considerable guilt on the edge of them. But there was too much GUILT at the heart of them. They were anything but securities. They are gone. Now we are looking for something to replace them and everybody is afraid to venture, or to invest his time, his energy or what is left of his money, until he has absolute security. Many people who have nothing to invest, who are too old, too unfortunate, too ill; and also those who are too lazy and too incompetent, are looking to the government to supply them with a security they never can win for themselves.

And alas, the security that seems to be sought by everyone is that false security which the poet saw long ago, the security of "chariots and horses," of economic plenty and material satiety. Going back over the long history of the race, that kind of security always has ended in ruin. It has proved to be hopelessly insecure.

Those nations that have armed themselves and taxed their people to support vast military organizations, have every one of them come down to the dust. It is a lie that security is to be found in vast national defenses involving arms and armies. Events have shown that man to be wrong who says: "An army and a navy second to none is the path to national security." I have a newspaper clipping on my desk, telling of the debate in Congress over the proposed addition of \$400,000,000 to the army budget. And right beneath it is a message from Tokio, telling us that Japan has just passed an additional war budget of \$600,000,000. Where is the security in that? I hear some talk about preparedness being insurance against war. When did insurance ever stop a fire? It pays some of the damage of a fire, but

it does not stop the fire. This so-called war insurance neither stops war nor pays the damage done after it is over. Alas, the nations have not learned the consummate folly of trusting in chariots and horses.

Nor have the people learned it. Naturally in such a catastrophe, as has come upon the world after its carnival of gambling and of waste, men will look for some scheme of recovery. We think that there must be some magic, whereby we can restore the security we have wasted with riotous living. Our world is full of plans for social security. Visionaries, like Upton Sinclair, propose that the government take over all our idle industries and our idle lands, and operate and cultivate them to the *nth* degree, thinking thereby to bring security back. But they ignore the whole problem of markets and of costs, the natural laws of supply and demand, and ten thousand other difficulties in the way.

There is popular demand that the government supply everybody with relief, with bonuses and with pensions out of the national treasury. If all the proposed legislation to that end were passed, it would involve a governmental expenditure of \$82,000,000,000, or nearly twice the income of the entire nation. The government would have but two ways to meet that terrific load. It might tax the people to meet it; but obviously you cannot tax people twice what it earns. Or, the government could print money to meet it. But that would mean that money would at once begin to decrease in value, in geometric ratio to the amount printed. Its purchasing power would correspondingly diminish, and in the end even if a man did have a pension of \$200 a month, how would he be better off, if he could buy no more with it than now he can with \$10.00? My daughter and I have

a stamp collection. In our collection are a number of stamps from post-war Germany. Germany, you remember, printed money to meet the demands of its people for economic security. Well, there is one stamp we have of the ordinary value of three marks. But it is surcharged with an inflation value printed above its normal price, and that inflated value is 500,000,000 marks. Presumably before inflation, a German would have said to himself, "If I could have 500,000,000 marks saved up, I would be rich and I would be secure for the rest of my life." Well, his government printed him into security and handed him his 500,000,000 marks, but all he can buy with it is a postage stamp. Think of the sad state of the German's security, when Dr. Townsend promises you \$200 a month, or any of the other exponents of relief through the national treasury come with their proposals that the government provide social security for everybody. Conceding good motives, when you take that word "security" and tangle it all up with doles and pensions and government insurance, you are indulging in a false ideal of security. No government can achieve it. A government or individual that promises it is selling you a gold brick. Any scheme of national restoration that leads away from the paths of common sense, that promises what is impossible, that envisions getting something for nothing, is a path that leads to the ruin of all security.

The President is quite right when he says: "Among our objectives, I place the security of the men, women, and children of the nation first." That is fine! But the President does not mean a security that rests in "chariots and horses," doles and pensions and relief. Mr. Hopkins, his spokesman, interprets the President to

mean this: "Not that society owes every man a living, but it does mean that every man shall have access to the opportunity to provide for himself and his family a decent and American way of living." THAT involves a security to which every man contributes, by his WORK, his WAGE, and according to his ABILITY. Society ought to take care of its unfortunates. It will have to care for even its lazy and its selfish people, I suppose, in times of real distress. But to set out to take care of everyone, just because he has reached a certain age or a certain stage of economic distress, violates justice and destroys all security. Government can do certain things for us in the line of security:

"We, the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this CONSTITUTION of the United States of America."

But right there government, as we Americans conceive it, has to stop. Government simply cannot supply us with money to spend, that we have not earned, world without end. They who cherish that hope are chasing a will o' the wisp. They are scattering energies, wasting time, enervating character, designed for use in the great adventures to which this age challenges us.

Even if government could do all this for us, it would be fatal to us as individuals. It would wreck our morale, swiftly bring us to that state of "Innocuous Desuetude" which Theodore Roosevelt feared so much. No person, no nation ever has amounted to anything,

whose citizens have been relieved by their government of the necessity for struggle, and out of whose life has gone the incentive for hard work. The most unhappy on earth are they who have the most of horses and chariots. They are the most insecure, who have greatest possessions.

I know there should be a more just distribution of the world's wealth. An editorial in one of our Communist papers comes to my desk this week with this statement: "Labour does not get enough to enable it to buy back the value of what it produces." "But that is a Communistic misstatement," says someone. Well, a recent research bulletin of the Brookings Institution says this:

"It seems morally certain, and statistically demonstrable that a nation, so richly endowed as the United States, could actually achieve the age-long goal of at least moderate economic well-being for all its population. . . . Our diagnosis of the economic system has revealed that the way in which the income resulting from the nation's productive activities is divided among the groups that comprise society, is at the root of most of our difficulties. . . . Inadequate buying power for the masses is responsible for the persistent failure to call forth our productive powers."

Between 1919 and 1929 the physical output of American industry increased 38%. This increase was produced by 3% fewer workers. The population of the nation during that period increased 15%, and should have meant 15% more employed. So the decrease in men employed was actually 18%; while wages increased only 9% for those at work. How could these 18% fewer workers consume a 38% increase in output with a wage

increase of only 9%? During those same years the income tax returns show that the incomes of the middle class were reduced 5%; the 80,000 at the top increased theirs 10%; and the 2,000 at the very top 16%; while the million dollar incomes increased from 20 to 46.

We are going to have to devise some means for a better distribution of the nation's wealth or we face economic disaster. That should be done at its source—within the industry itself, rather than by taxes that mean confiscation. It will have to be done by Christian employers and Christian labourers co-operating in their common task. Unless that is done, politics will essay to do it, and we will face the peril of revolution. It is up to the sober, sane, and thoughtful people of all classes to devise some means to democratize our economic life. Here is a mighty challenge to the oncoming generation of young business men. If from them comes not the motive for it, nothing is surer than that it will come by way of violent catastrophe. If it comes that way, our liberties will be lost, and we will be under a dictatorship, where all activity will be regimented, and life, our most precious possession, will be imperilled. We can take our choice.

But even at its best, even if we can find some wise means of better distribution, let no man think that we will be the soft security of easy living. Life has always resisted that word "security," and it will not easily surrender. Life is a thing of struggle, effort, adventure. Take these out of it and it grows soft, it rots, it dies. There was a man once who builded his barns and then enlarged them, to store his increasing goods. He said: "Oh, my soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Take thine ease." But that very day his soul

was required of him. His security was not so secure after all. I had a friend years ago, who retired in middle life. He said to me, "I have saved \$50,000 and it is all in government bonds. I am fixed for life." He was; but he lived only three months. The softness of security, and the let-down that came with it, weakened his heart and he came to untimely death. Chariots and horsemen did not make his life secure.

The truth is, life is an adventure. When men feel so secure that they cease adventuring, they are done for. "Abram went out not knowing whither he went." So did Columbus, and the Pilgrims, and George Washington, and all the other heroic souls that have come down out of their hills of peace and followed Jesus as He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem.

We need to remember that insecurity in itself is not fatal. Until lately everybody had expected a certain amount of it. Now the fear of it is holding up all advance in almost every human activity. But if ever we are to "open the future's Portals, we must launch OUR *Mayflower* and steer boldly into the unknown wintry sea." We must be adventurers. So long as we stand like hesitating Hamlets saying, "To be or not to be," the times will be out of joint as they were for him.

Is there any sort of security, then, that we may hope for? "We will make mention of the name of Jehovah our God." The whole psalm, from which this text is taken, is a psalm of security—the security that comes from Him, Who answers from heaven with "the saving strength of his right arm." Man's security does not consist in the abundance of things he has, nor in dependence on a dole or pension or a government relief. True security is found in all that is involved in that phrase,

"The Name of God." What does that mean? It means a life strengthened from above, and made strong in the character of God, to render a man equal to the uncertainties and to all the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune that he meets.

True security does not rest in an economic or social set-up, but rather in what a man is within, in powers that make him conscious of being equal to whatever may arise. It all issues from that great word—character. The test of security is personality. The NAME of God in the Hebrew included all that was inherent in the divine character. It was all the riches of His Being. It was not the material riches he had created. Our ultimate security is here. We are made secure not by collateral but by character. The highest security lies in strength of heart. Hearts become strong when linked to the life of God.

Involved in all this is a life of loyalty to Truth, Honour, Square Dealing, Justice. There must be a clean soul and an altruistic motive. That is the way God has built His universe. A high integrity runs through all nature. Arcturus will be in his place tonight. The evening star will arrive at the hour foretold. Dawn will come tomorrow without any reference to the politicians in Berlin or Leningrad or Washington. The universe is the body of the great Spirit we call God. And as I live and move and have my being in Him, I too share the security born of His integrity. I shall be equal to whatever comes to pass, because He is equal to it. I am a fellow-labourer with God. The world may pass away and the lust thereof, but he that is doing the will of God abideth forever. He has security. He is safe in the integrity of God.



Then there is Faith. Faith is the great word of all adventurers. It is by faith that the worlds have been framed. Faith is giving substance to things hoped for. No matter what changes come, it "endures, seeing things invisible." Faith alone can deliver us from the fears that wreck our sense of security. Faith produces a creative quality that eventuates mighty works. It makes men strong to master hard situations. It brings a feeling of adequacy. It substitutes "pluck" for "luck" in the vocabulary of achievement. "This is the victory that overcometh the world," was the cry that John flung into the face of Domitian in the first century, "EVEN OUR FAITH."

*"Columbus found a world, and had no chart,
Save that which faith deciphered on the skies;
To trust the soul's invincible surmise
Was all his science and his only art."*

But beyond faith is Love. There is the great Name for God. If it be true that fear is the basis for our feeling of insecurity, here is the cure. "There is no fear in love, for perfect love casteth out fear." Love—devotion to a person is the greatest creative dynamic of them all. Here is a weary mother, apparently at the end of her resources. Her child falls ill. Love at once releases energies that will see her through long days of tireless watching. Love opens up channels of irresistible power for strengthening and healing our bodies, nerving our souls for great achievements, strengthening our wills to master what seems impossible. The happy soul who has found love and who loses self in it, is more secure than Henry Ford or Andrew Mellon with all their millions. For somehow, love is the power that unites us to the

Eternal Friend. It is the bond of our union with God.

To believe that the universe is friendly—that Love is there—everywhere in it—the very heart of it—takes away all sense of loneliness. “I am not alone,” said Jesus in the garden, “the Father is with me.” It was that which led Him through the travail of a broken body and a broken heart, into the victory that overcame the world. To be at-one with Him whose name is Love, is to lose all fear. “There is no fear in love for perfect love casteth out all fear.” It is to gird the weak with omnipotence, to unite the temporal to the timeless. It is to know the security of the name of the Lord, whose “word returns not unto Him void, but accomplishes that which He purposes and prospers in the thing whereto He sends it.”

“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will make mention of the Name of Jehovah, our God”—our one source of security in a chaotic world. As Sidney Lanier well says in “The Marshes of Glynn”:

*“As the marsh-hen secretly builds in the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest in the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh grass sends in the sod,
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God.”¹*

“O Love that wilt not let us go, We rest our weary souls in Thee.” Thou art our strong tower. Thou wilt keep us in perfect peace. Hold Thou us up and we shall be safe. In a day when even youth faints and is weary, so unite our young hearts to Thee, that we shall be able to mount up with wings as eagles, to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint. Amen.

¹ Sidney Lanier, *Poems* (Charles Scribner's Sons).

X

THE TRAGEDY OF DISUSE

"Take therefore the talent from him."—MATTHEW 25: 28.

THE tragedy of this parable is not that of inequality but of disuse. The five-talent man is not commended because he had more than the one-talent man, but because he used what he had. The other is condemned because he failed to use even a small gift. Failing to use his talent he has it taken from him. There is nothing arbitrary about that. It is the way of nature. What we do not use, we lose. Any biologist will tell you that disuse causes atrophy. The ability of a muscle or a mind to function is lost when it is not exercised. Indeed, the primary law of all life is that "action determines growth."

Once, in common with other animals, man had power to move his ears. A very useful function it was, there in the jungle amid the perils of primitive life. It enabled man to detect more readily simultaneous sounds. He could move his ears to detect danger approaching from every direction. But as he came out of the bush into the larger safety of human life, as his intelligence came to his aid in meeting emergencies of peril, he no longer needed this protective function. He quit moving his ears, and in time lost the power to do so. The muscle still is there, but it has atrophied.

This fact runs all through life. We defeat our very

purpose when we try to save through disuse. Every treasure is given us by the Creator for living use, and when we fail to use it, it is taken from us. Even of the great ultimate treasure—LIFE itself—Jesus said: "He that saveth his life shall lose it." The man who is continuously saving himself, worrying about his health, cutting down his activities for fear he may hurt himself, is quite apt to fall ill and die an early death. People rust out sooner than they wear out. "Action determines growth." What is not used is taken away.

In his later years Charles Darwin used to lament his loss of interest in literature. In youth Shakespeare had been his delight. But after long years of application to scientific study and experimentation, he lost his appreciation for the bard of Avon and could enjoy him no longer. Indeed, he lamented that he had lost all spiritual sensitivity, and cared for nothing save the daily routine of biological research. The soul of Darwin had atrophied through disuse.

To you who are going out to face after college days the world's unending challenge to living usefulness, I want to address this theme.

Among other things you will have the privilege of handling money. Money is one of our most desirable possessions. It is our standard of wealth. We have to have it. It represents our capacity to possess many of the necessary equipments of life. For that very reason, money is given us to use. In that use a reasonable provision for future needs has of course to be considered. The saving of "something for a rainy day" is a justifiable use of money. But rainy days are not many nor are they long. A very little saved for this purpose usually is enough.

Yet here is a great company of foolish men who are bending every energy to be rich. They think of nothing but to accumulate. Their heaven is built around an advance in the stock market. They hoard and save and deny themselves and their fellows rich blessings, in order that they may have great possessions. Such a pursuit shuts up the very springs of happiness. A man eager in that pursuit finds his life full of worries, barren of friendships, unenriched by great thoughts and high experiences. He probably will get a pile of money in the end, only to discover the futility of it all. He will lose most of it! Eighty per cent. of the world's fortunes are dissipated before their creators die. We have witnessed this tragedy at its full in our day. It is the tragedy of disuse.

Irvin Cobb tells of a Puritan ancestor who was so saving that he never would "spend Sunday"; he always "kept the Sabbath." People who are that saving, who keep everything, who never spend nor give, never know what life really is. They lose even what they save. Mr. Cobb in the same story tells of a run on a bank in the South. A coloured man was in the line. Just as he came to the window, it was let down with a bang. Someone responded to his bewilderment, saying that closing time had come. "Haven't you ever heard of a bank's busting?" he was asked. "Sho, I has," he answered. "But I never had one bust right in my face befo'." During the past years we have seen many a place where we had stored our money "bust right in our face." It ought to teach us a lesson Jesus left us long ago. There was a man whose money was represented in grain, stored up in barns. Instead of sowing it, he always was building larger barns. Came a night when "his soul was re-

quired of him," and his alleged securities proved not "secure." They were lost. This is the epitaph Eternal Truth wrote on his tomb, "Thou Fool."

Axel Munthe, in *The Story of San Michele*, has paraphrased that epitaph: "What you keep to yourself you lose, what you give away you keep forever. What is the good of hoarding your money? Death has another key to your safe." But beyond money, which is an acquired blessing, are all those natural endowments with which our Creator has endowed us.

There is human speech, for example. Can you imagine a more precious treasure than our ability to communicate our thoughts with each other? Here is one of Nature's divinest gifts. Think how through long ages men have been working on that gift to develop it and to make it a thing of beauty and a joy forever. What marvels the tongue has brought forth. It took lisps and babblings of months before YOU, as a child, could fashion a single word. And all along daily, you have practiced the art of speech. But has all this effort of the ages been worth while, if all you can say is what you said yesterday? Compare the possibilities of speech with what you are wont to say—angry words, irreverent words, trivial words, critical words, profane words. Have you lost the fine art of speech through its disuse or its abasement to gutter uses?

Here too is our capacity to love—our possibility of friendship. We all know that friendships have to be cultivated. They are not weeds but precious flowers in the garden of life. All along the way friendships of great promise are opening up before us. The friendships of college days, how wonderful they are. And far down the future's broadening way, friends are everywhere

waiting to greet us. Than this there is no greater treasure, a friend and his "adoption tried." But think how many friendships are lying like some cathedral, in ruins. Absence, the press of other interests, selfish purposes have come, and you have not taken time to keep your friendships in repair. A widening gulf arose between you and some spirit that once you cherished, and the friendship is gone through inattention, through disuse. Here is one of the supreme tragedies of our age—we do not cultivate our friendships. We come like Keats "alone and palely loitering," by "a withered sedge along the lake, where no birds sing." There is a word that may well be spoken to those who still face life with its wonderful possibilities of friendship: "The friends thou hast and their adoption tried, grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel." For the winning of new friends there is one recipe, "BE ONE." "He that would have friends must show himself friendly."

Once more, there is within us all an instinctive hunger for what is true and good and beautiful. We come trailing clouds of glory from God our home. Heaven lies all about us in our infancy. There are in us possibilities of entering into a rich and beautiful culture, for we have not merely our own native gifts, but also we have all the beautiful things that ages behind us have created for our help in realizing ourselves in cultural greatness.

Not many of us get very far with it. A prison house begins to close around a growing boy. Low walls of sensual interest, social provincialism, sordid ambitions, earth-born habits begin to hem him in. The way is blocked, by immediate passions and gratifications, to the more remote satisfactions that are one with an appreciation of the higher gifts and graces. Ten thousand trivial

things turn us aside from the great issues of our being, and we never come to full self-realization, just because we do not make the effort necessary to develop ourselves in line with our highest possibilities. We live amid a low train of trivial toys and fail to soar and reach immortal joys. So, alas, many of us come to maturity in a state of arrested development. The promise of our youth is all unfulfilled. We have not attended to our noblest powers, we have given up our high aspirations under pressure of something ordinary, and are stunted children living like Peter Pan in "Never Never Land." There are whole libraries of books full of the treasures of human thoughts, but we have been reading the latest "hot one" from the pornographers. There have been a million useful activities in the great game of life calling us to develop our powers, but we have spent our days over a bridge-table. Songs of joyous, lilting music from the masters have been ringing through the earth, but our musical taste is on the level of the jazz maker. We have had dreams of being the head of a beautiful cultured home that would be a bit of heaven on earth; but we have loved the things of Hollywood more than the things of heaven, and our parenthood has been a miserable failure.

The whole field of culture has been so neglected, that at best we are dim lights of the dream we have dreamed. Our noblest powers atrophied long ago, and we are compelled to live with ourselves to the last syllable of recorded time, half-developed, stunted pygmies of our immortal selves. We have neglected the gift that is within us and have come to the tragedy of disuse.

Think once more of the treasures we have in our national life. It is a commonplace to say that our privi-

leges and rights as citizens have been dearly bought. Think of our liberties. The charter of our freedom was written in the blood of millions of our fathers. Men have been toiling, battling, dying since time knows when, that we might have the liberty we enjoy. Read our own history or that of our mother country. What is it all? It is the story of a fight for democracy and freedom. We forget the preciousness of it. We are not willing to make the sacrifices in our day that will hold it. We are dividing ourselves up into groups, demanding special rights for our crowd as against the common welfare. Soldiers demanding a bonus; elderly people demanding unreasonable excessive pensions; farmers looking to the government to subsidize them into prosperity, as of 1914; labour unions demanding that their peak of high wages, as of 1929, be restored—until between the two peaks the ultimate consumer lives in a low valley of scanty income, long hours, and depressing want. Is this a healthy situation for freedom? It is the death of freedom. Unless we use our liberty to the high ends which evoked the struggle for it, we will find it gone, lost through disuse.

Beyond the heritage of liberty is that other privilege of democracy—the right of suffrage, of moulding public life and of sharing it. That too is a precious heritage. But thousands of citizens are so careless of it, that they never register their votes. Their fireside is too comfortable, their play too interesting, their business too demanding. That is the surest way of losing this dearly purchased privilege in a government “of the people and by the people and for the people.” The citizen who thus neglects his influence in public life has no complaint to make if he be poorly governed. He who forsakes his

high privilege of citizenship in a democracy ought to lose it.

There is one thing more. The tragedy of disuse is at its worst, when we come to the realm of our moral and spiritual life. Here is a tragedy quite universal in our day. The world is full of men and women who have fallen from the heights and are living in the lowlands of spiritual experience, because of neglect.

Once their church claimed their interest and their attention. Once Christ's cause called forth their devotion. They found a thrill and a gladness in sharing with others the worship of the sanctuary, the winning of men to Christ, the redeeming of the social order to His way. But now, "Where is the joy that once they knew when first they found the Lord?" It is gone! Every church has a number of such tragedies.

There is in the world of organic nature what is called "arrested development." A tree planted in some unfavourable spot remains ungrown. A child, full of promise in its earlier years, never comes to maturity. Influences unseen and unaccountable stop their growth. Their development is arrested, and they never come to fullness of life. How often that happens in the life of the spirit. And most often it comes because it has been neglected. It has not been washed by streams of prayer, nor fertilized by worship, nor nurtured in the friendship of God. It does not grow "in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and man," as Jesus grew. There were many in Jesus' day who knew that tragedy. They followed Jesus a little while, but afterward they went back and walked no more after Him. Men do that to-day. So Christ is saying to us every one: "Will ye also go away?"

As a minister I feel deeply the tragedy of it all. Not that it matters to me personally, but that I see people once Christians missing what seem to me to be the very essentials of life, because they have rejected the one fellowship, the one service that is truly Christian. I see their spiritual poverty. Some day *they* will see it. They will face a situation where they are up against it. They will need God mightily. They will reach out for those spiritual reserves they ought to have in time of need. They will find them gone. God Himself will seem to have disappeared. Here is a young man saying to me: "I don't believe there is a God. I have been told He will help people in time of need. You know the great need I have. Well, I reached out to take hold of Him and my hand came back empty. There is no God." Now God was not there for this man because, "wasting his powers getting and spending" and thinking more of beating "par" than becoming acquainted with God, he had caused the organ by which a man apprehends God to become atrophied. "Spiritual things are spiritually discerned." God is Spirit, and this man's spiritual sense was dead.

Sometimes people send for me in such a case, in the hope that I may have some magic to make up the losses that have come through spiritual atrophy. There is none. I cannot give them what through disuse they have lost. God cannot. The only recovery is by that long, slow process of exercise and use, like that by which in the physical world a victim of infantile paralysis restores his atrophied muscles. It is possible of course to turn oneself about and face a new way. "*Conversion*" is an instant act. It is turning around and facing another way. Anybody can do that. But that other word the

theologians were wont to use, to describe the process of growth in goodness, "sanctification," spells a long process. It is won by a living use of God's opportunities, passing by, through all the years of this life and of the great forever. There is no magic to create it apart from USE.

Horace Bushnell has a great sermon entitled "The Capacity for Religion Extirpated by Disuse." He mentions the sin of sloth, which the mediæval theologians listed as one of the seven deadly sins. The word they used was not sloth, but the Latin word *accidia*, which has been defined as "the breaking down of interest in the things which are worthy of a man's endeavour." How many there are who are dissipating their powers by this deadly sin. The capacity for religion is being extirpated by disuse out of millions of lives in America. Hundreds of people who want to be known as Christians are going through that tragedy. Their once high interest in religion is being destroyed by lesser interests, until they awake some day and find it gone. Some of them still cling to the hope of going to heaven when they die. One wonders why they should cherish such a hope. They have no interest in the things of heaven now. If heaven WERE a PLACE, they would not be at home there. Mark Hopkins was once asked who would go to heaven, and he said: "I don't know whether this one or that one will go. But whoever would be likely to feel at home in heaven, will be found there when the time comes." ONLY those who are likely to feel at home in heaven will ever get there, for heaven is not a place, but a state of being. When you send your soul through the invisible, some letters of the after-life to spell, always your soul comes back saying, "I myself am heaven

and hell." If you have allowed your interest in things spiritual, in heavenly treasures, to disintegrate through disuse, never expect by any chance to go to heaven when you die.

All this tragedy of disuse is a world tragedy just now. Our generation has been very busy about material things. We have stretched out the power of our fist to strike blows miles away; we have extended our eyes far out into the stratosphere and into the infinitesimal beneath us; we have enlarged our bodies until in a few hours' time we can be almost omnipresent; our voice can be heard around the world; we have built great industries and great cities, and the whole world is athrob with our achievements. But our souls have lost their power to push into eternal realms. Our spiritual powers are atrophied. Progress has stopped. Achievement languishes. Ruin threatens. If ever we are to go on, our souls must throw off their paralysis and begin to use spiritual powers by which we enter into life.

So this is more than a world problem. It is yours. Do not forget this: If you neglect your gifts, you lose them. If you neglect the high interest of your soul, you lose it, "and what profit you if you gain the whole world and lose your soul." If you neglect God, you lose Him. Fail to use your talent and you find it gone. Never mind how badly you may need it some day. It will be gone and no magic ever will get it back.

Why not, then, in this day of opportunity, ere it be too late, turn your life toward the things that are worth while, the things that endure, the riches that moth and rust cannot corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal. Why should you permit yourself to come to that hour, when facing the ghost of a wasted life, you find yourself

saying those saddest of all sad words, "It might have been." How much better to be able to say at the end: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

XI

THE IMPERIAL ATOM

LONG centuries ago, a Palestinian shepherd, looking up into the "great and awful city of God" above him, exclaimed:

*"When I consider Thy heavens,
The moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained;
What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?"*

What would he have said had he known that these radiant lights of the heavens, which in their majesty seemed so near, were mighty planets and glowing suns, trillions of miles away? Suppose he could hear Professor Jeans saying of these stars that:

"The majority are so large that hundreds of thousands of earths could be packed inside each and leave room to spare; here and there we come upon a giant star large enough to contain millions of millions of earth. And the total number of stars in the universe is probably something like the total number of grains of sand on all the seashores of the world. Such is the littleness of our home in space when measured up against the total substance of the universe."¹

The truth is vaster than we have dreamed. Astronomers no longer reckon distance in miles, but in "light years." A ray of light travelling 186,000 miles a second,

¹ Sir James Jeans, *The Mysterious Universe*, p. 1 (Macmillan).

would require 50,000 years to pass from one end to the other of the universe, of which we are aware. If we were to reduce these starry distances to miles, the unit would be the parsec, which is a distance of about nineteen trillion miles. Our astronomers know of at least one universe distant from our earth forty-five million parsecs! The mind is bewildered at the thought.

So far as distance is concerned our world is but a speck in a vast infinity, and we ourselves, tiny evanescent atoms amid it all. Yet, for all that, Professor Jeans is confident that we are all there is to life in the universe. Listen:

"The universe appears to be indifferent to life like our own. Perhaps we ought to say it appears to be actively hostile to life like our own. For the most part, empty space is so cold that all life in it would be frozen; most of the matter in space is so hot as to make life on it impossible. Into such a universe we have stumbled."²

Such are the facts the scientist discovers. There his work ends. He may begin to draw conclusions from his facts, but at that moment he ceases to be a scientist and becomes a philosopher. What conclusions may we draw from the fact of our littleness in the vastness of the universe?

Two thoughts are possible about it. We may follow Bertrand Russell and conclude that this vast mechanism is hostile to our life; that over us "blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, Omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way"; and "upon all the race slow sure doom falls, pitiless and dark."

² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

*"Stately purposes, valour in battle, splendid annals of army and fleet,
Death for the right cause, death for the wrong cause, shouts of victory, groans of defeat,
Raving politics never at rest while the world's pale history runs—
What is it all but the murmur of gnats in the gleam of a million suns."*

But that is not the *only* philosophy open to us. We can still hold the conclusion of the psalmist that life is a sublime thing. Man may be an atom, but he is an imperial atom. There is a realm in which the footrule and the balance never count—it is the realm where reason and love reign. Love laughs at locksmiths; it is not baffled by size; it is not thwarted by space. There is, in this atom, that which is beyond scientific reckoning. Professor Jeans himself sees it, and he concludes that the mind that can apprehend this universe in its vastness must be greater than the universe itself. He comes to the conclusion that Sir Oliver Lodge reached a quarter of a century ago, "Once you have admitted that reason and love are in human beings, you have established their existence in the universe, and made inevitable their reality in the Force that created it." If that be true, John was right, "Now are we the sons of God." Never mind if our size be atomic. Size is not the ultimate standard of values. Never mind if we discern no signs of life, kindred to our own, anywhere else in the universe. Our knowledge is fragmentary. It is not unscientific to believe that there may be other forms of life in other worlds, not requiring physical food, and atmosphere, and temperate heat.

We need not be dismayed. Even if our little lives be all there are, they are still bright with the light of Deity.

Suppose we *do* make God in our image, as we are accused of doing, it is because He hath first made us. Cardinal Newman echoes our deepest thought: "If I looked into a mirror and did not see my face, I should have that sort of feeling which comes upon me when I look into this living, busy world and see no reflection of its Creator."

"The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." "We are lesser, broken lights" of the Mind and the Love that makes the rushing world its home. It follows that life is a possession of rarest worth. Its value is not diminished nor destroyed by the knowledge of its littleness. If the Force behind the universe is mindful of this imperial atom, then our great passion should be to preserve it.

Yet we know that it is greatly imperilled. Scientists say that after billions of ages the earth will cool, and the temperature become so low as to make life impossible. The sun is dying, and we are moving further from it into cold and outer darkness. Time will come when the race will experience what the physicists call "heat death." "The end of the journey cannot be other than universal death."

But that calamity billions of years off may never happen. Nobody can guess. So far as we can see, nature is just as kind to us as she ever was. More kind—for as we harness more and more her powers, we find them benevolent forces serving our welfare with accurate precision and illimitable power. The sun shines, the rain falls, there is seedtime and harvest. Electricity and steam and oil perform their miracles before our eyes. More and more it can be said: "Thou hast put all things under his feet."

Yet human existence is imperilled. What threatens is "man's inhumanity to man"; his greed, his hate, his

pettiness and his provincialism. Suppose our earth is the one spot in all the universe where sentient life is possible, and then in this one place where it can exist, it should decline and die through man's own folly. That were indeed a tragedy! Yet that tragedy is imminent. We do not have to accept all the dreary conclusions of Lathrop Stoddard, Oswald Spengler, and other social pessimists to realize it.

In many things we are better than all preceding ages. We are less cruel for one thing. Not long ago I went through old Fort Marion on the Florida Coast. What horrible cruelties were practiced in those old dungeons of two centuries ago. And yet today there is a vast deal of suffering born of man's inhumanity to man. When twenty-five million men are out of work in the world, and a tenth of the world's population suffering for the very necessities of life, we know that a great deal of it is due to human wrongs. The complexities of a machine age have, for instance, separated the worker from his employer. A little group of men can sit down in a directors' room and make decisions that will bring pain and sorrow and suffering to workers far away. They are not ruthlessly bad men. If a child before their door were about to be run over, they would make almost any risk to save it; but as officers of a corporation they will make a decision that condemns hundreds of children to hunger and death in some mining town or factory far away. They have no sympathetic imagination to visualize pain and suffering beyond their eyes. This is one of the terrible evils of industry today. Thousands of men are discharged from employment, by those in authority, who know nothing of the tortures involved for those on whom the blow falls.

There are others who do cruel and unjust things just because they are ignorant or incompetent. Think of those Congressmen who have just passed that iniquitous bill liberating the Philippines. The Filipinos want their freedom and they should have it. But this legislation gives it to them at the price of their economic ruin and political disaster. Set it down to the ignorance and incompetence of puerile intellects, whom we in the tragedy of our political indifference have put in places of power. Much of the suffering of the world is also caused by downright selfishness. Men and women are greedy to secure for themselves material possessions, luxuries, pleasures, powers. They do not care how many people suffer, so long as they gain these ends.

So it has come to pass that an age which shudders at the cruelties of the past has actually become so inhuman as to bring down a weight of widespread suffering that threatens life itself in this one spot in all the universe where we know it exists.

Here then is my theme. The test of any civilization, any program, any attitude, is what it does to human life. The individual man is the supreme thing. That is the Christian view of it. Every institution must minister to human welfare or it must go. If men forget that, their fires sink on dune and headland, far-called their navies melt away. All their pomp of yesterday is one with Nineveh and Tyre.

*“Voices are crying for the dust of Tyre
From Baalbec and the walls of Babylon
We built our kingdoms upon self-desire
And perished from the gaze of morning sun.”*³

³ Edwin Markham, “Witness of the Dust.”

Even the sacred Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. "How much better is man than a sheep?" To Jesus human life was the supreme value. He had come to bring it life "more abundantly."

A few, walking in the dim shadows of antiquity, had sensed it. Homer tells us that when Hector went out to the Trojan war, Andromache begs him not to go to battle and leave their little son an orphan. "All this," she says, "is a care unto me; and I have respect also unto the Trojans and the long-robed Trojan women." She is thinking beyond the trivial causes of the war to the human suffering that will come not only to her own life, but to the women of Troy, the enemy.

Some hearts were awake to human values in the ancient world, but they never came to their own until Jesus touched them. Even in the Ten Commandments a wife is numbered among the other chattels a man owns, his ox, his goods, his house, his cattle. Jesus was the first to see in little children the Kingdom of Heaven. He was the first great teacher to sit down and eat with social outcasts. He could have love and mercy for all sorts of sensual sinners; but His scorn and invective were poured out upon those who robbed widows' houses and stole children's bread; who caused one of the little ones to offend.

He did not just love humanity, He loved men. He gave His life for them, all sorts and conditions of men. A publican trying to recover his self-respect; a blind beggar trying to recover his sight; a rich man worried about his soul; a fisherman worried about his luck; a leper crying "unclean," and a thief crying, "Remember me." Jesus came from the lower classes but He had no hatred for the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia that

marks the radical of today. He repudiated all class hatreds, and declared that we are all, rich and poor, children in the family of a common Father. Right here He differs from the social radical of today. That difference is abysmal. Karl Marx and Jesus are at opposite poles. Russia is a sad, sad contradiction of the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus insists that every sort of human soul small be regarded and treated as a person, not as a class or race. Edwin Markham predicts a day

*"When the wise King out of the nearing heaven comes
To break the spell of long millenniums,
To hush and heroize the world
Beneath the flag of Brotherhood unfurled."*

It is *Jesus*, with His law of love, not Marx with his law of hate Who will be that king. Christians with their gospel of brotherhood will build a Utopia on earth that Russia with her class hatred can never, never achieve. Jesus was no sentimentalist, but He is forever against the man who puts a trivial value on the human soul. He would not be awed today by the vastness of the cosmic spaces we know. Our microscopic position in a universe immeasurably vast would not alter His view of our illimitable worth. The supreme values for Him were found where love and life are. There is a God and Father of us all, and all we are brothers. We are of infinitely more value than a sheep.

Now the very chaos of our times is driving home the truth that unless we accept that valuation, and begin to "make man a sacred thing to men," we are not going to survive. Nature's "ice age" may be billions of years away, but we may perish amid "inhumanity's unkindly frosts" sooner than we think. Carlyle tells us of a

woman of the alley who died of typhoid and neglect in a hovel, after she had unwittingly infected many people of the avenue who also died. "Her typhoid fever killed them," he says. "They were her brothers even though they denied it."

The people of Europe are our brothers; so are the people of Africa and the Orient; so is the dark skinned man living down on the river bank. The wage-earner and the capitalist are brothers. Society's silk-clad daughters and the ragged Rahabs of the slums—they are sisters. We have not lived in the light of that truth. We have not put Jesus' valuation on man. So our world has come tumbling down around us. There is resentment, distrust, and hate everywhere. The seeds of ruin are being sown in every social soil. The world is skidding into hell because we have not put human values at the centre of our society, and made human souls our supreme concern. We wait in vain for a better day until, behind all petty planning for it, this ideal emerges and endures. Men are not instruments. They are ends.

Do we realize it? Are we behaving in the light of it? We are not. Let me enforce that word with an illustration out of our present day experience.

The greatest destroyer of human life in our world is that grim madness we call war. We ourselves have witnessed battlefields piled high with thirty million dead. There they are; their lives slain; their human possibilities shot away; their hopes and dreams bled to death; the love and the service they might have given, gone forever. At home sorrowing hearts and impoverished homes. A whole civilization in the throes of economic ruin and moral catastrophe.

Why is this? Because national glory, trade supremacy,

increased riches for munition-makers, and a larger place in the sun for militarists and politicians are deemed of more value than human lives. The horror of it is on every heart. We swear that "it shall not be again." Yet behold there are more men in arms than when the great war began. There are more hideous devices for slaughter being manufactured than ever. The Germans still hate the French, and the French hate the Germans, and are as close to throwing themselves at each other's throats as they ever were. There is no friendship between former allies. There is no friendship between former enemies. Aside from a few insincere treaties signed by the nations, every preparation is for war. The representatives of the nations gather at Geneva to consider disarmament. But that is the one thing they DO NOT consider. They are disputing about the size of the guns that will be used in the next war; determining just what type of bacteria may be used in destroying whole populations; how many bombs a plane may carry on a night raid over civilian peoples. Human values are lost sight of. The selfish desires of nations are supreme. Men and women and children no more enter into the reckoning than they did when Napoleon said: "What are 100,000 men to me?"

Professor Einstein is right. "The peoples of the earth have been deceived, cheated, and goaded long enough by forces that have no care for human values." "From now on the people must take the affair into their own hands if they desire peace. The workers of the world will have to refuse to manufacture or transport ammunition; taxpayers refuse to pay their money to build armaments; and citizens refuse to shed the blood of their fellow men." "Men and women, not governments, must take measures

against war and its weapons. The nations do not believe that human interest is above the state."

Surely I have said enough to make you see that our age with all its boasted humanism is far, very far, from an adequate expression of it in current life. Our civilization reels along a descending path, because life in all its sublime values is not the motive of human conduct.

Until it becomes so, we will continue falling. We will not find economic recovery, political order, or social advance. We shall have to develop in society and in ourselves the humanism of Jesus, or we are done for.

Johan Bojer in his story, *The Great Hunger*, brings us a story of times very like our own. There is hardship and suffering and famine. The hero of the story comes one day to the conclusion that someone must rise above the sordid scenes of life, and "in the midst of suffering take heed that the godlike does not die." One morning before it is dawn he rises and taking the very last bit of grain from his own bin, he sows it in the field of his enemy. When the sun is rising, he comes back to his own fields, and there he finds beside the fence his wife smiling up at him, as though "she too had risen from the ocean of suffering that in the daybreak she might have her part in the creating of God."

Whenever a man determines that the godlike shall not die, and makes it his business to live in godlike relationship to his fellows, even to loving his enemies, he creates God in a desolate world. He may be an atom in a vast cosmos, but he is an imperial atom. His soul goes out to travel among the stars; the Infinite is his dwelling place, and underneath him are the Everlasting Arms.

Great God, our littleness takes heart to play, Beneath

the greatness of Thy state; The only comfort of our littleness, Is that Thou art great. Amid all the starry vastness that is Thy home, we rejoice to remember that Thou hast remembered us. Sons of God are we now. Though it doth not yet appear what we shall be; we know that at Thine appearing we shall be like Thee, for we shall see Thee as Thou art.

XII

THE RELEASE OF SPLENDOUR *

DR. GEORGE MORRISON in one of his sermons tells us that Lockhart first met Walter Scott at a gathering of mutual friends. The conversation fell on living poets and one of the group lamented that he never had seen Byron. Scott recalled the beauty of Byron's face and said, "Doctor, the photographs give you no idea of it: the lustre is there but it is not lighted up." What a haunting sentence: "the lustre is there but it is not lighted up." How descriptive of the lives of all of us!

In babyhood's bright hour we come "trailing clouds of glory from God who is our home." Years pass, and for some the glory has grown brighter, but for others, there comes what we call "arrested development." A tree planted at some corner where keen winds chill its sap and blight its tender shoots remains ungrown. A child on whom has fallen some mysterious malady will fail to develop a sturdy frame, and will not come to full physical power. It is often so in the growth of our personalities. Jesus said: "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." All the beautiful radiance of our Father's Paradise is planted in the least of us. All the lustrous, flashing jewels of the godlike graces are set within our souls. But the lustre is unlighted. It is shut up within,

* At the Autumn Convocation.

undeveloped, never reaches its full sheen, never flashes back its divinity on a darkened world.

In Robert Browning's poem, Paracelsus is telling Festus and Michal of his life's aspiration to attain what is highest. He is speaking of the attainment of TRUTH.

*"Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
From outward things, whate'er you may believe.
There is an inmost centre in us all
Where truth abides in fullness; and around,
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in —
This perfect, clear perception, which is truth.
A baffling and perverted carnal mesh
Binds it, and makes all error. And to KNOW,
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without."*

Truth is an imprisoned splendour. Our task is to release it. That is true of all the shining wonders of the soul. Beautiful lives are not gotten by putting on beautiful garments, any more than beautiful faces can be created with cosmetics. Lovely lives, like lovely faces, come by releasing the imprisoned splendour that is already within.

"Thou desirest truth in the inward parts," cries a poet of Israel, meditating on the wonder of his being. Truth is in the inward parts. To set free its glory and bring it forth in living beauty is our being's end and aim.

Here lies the fundamental motive of education. I like that root meaning of the word: "to lead out." I wish that home and church and school held more closely to it. Our method has been too much that of pouring water into a supposedly empty vessel, and not enough of developing the spring. We have tried to bring splen-

dour to young lives by pouring *in* instead of drawing *out*. The result is a race of men and women who have fine feathers but are not fine birds.

Education has been mechanical not spiritual; factual not functional. It has adorned life; it has not vitalized it. It has clothed it with a splendour of things; it has not released the imprisoned splendour. The truth of this is apparent in the finished products all about us. Men are not thinking loftily, behaving nobly, living altruistically. The Kingdom of Heaven within is not reflected in shining lives without. We have knowledge—there is no doubt of that. But it has not kept us out of prison, it has not made us socially-minded, it has not moved us wisely to use our riches or our freedom, it has not given us sound minds and pure hearts.

J. Brierley in one of his essays speaks of "the inwardness of events":

"It is only when we begin to realize that every event, in addition to its outer form, has an inward life of its own that we are in a position to study it aright. . . . It is a great step in the interpretation of life when we have discovered that all events are ultimately spiritual. . . . The roughest, rudest block of fact that lies across our path may suddenly open and from its store of hidden contents pour out undreamed-of possibilities of spiritual treasure."¹

It is so with life. The whole life-process, rightly used, is given for this end: that we, being sons of God, may grow into the image and likeness of our Creator, from glory unto glory. We are not designed to be fringed gentians in the garden of life, our beauty all shut up

¹ J. Brierley, *Ourselves and the Universe* (Methodist Book Concern, New York).

within; but unfolding flowers, opening in the sunlight to a fuller florescence, a finer fragrance, which lies now imprisoned in the very depths of our being.

Therein consists true culture. Therein is the promise of the millennium. Just now the world is very busy trying to put on culture, as though it were something you could buy and wear like a garment. Elbert Hubbard used to tell of a new-millionaire out West, who sent his daughter to an eastern college. She was not doing well, and the dean wrote him. He came East and demanded to know why the school was letting her go. "Well, you see," said the dean, trying to soften the situation, "your daughter lacks capacity." "Lacks capacity!" he replied; "my daughter shall lack nothing. Buy her one!" Ah, but you can't do that. You can cultivate what capacity you have, and thereby release imprisoned splendour that will amaze you. But you cannot buy capacity or culture. Too bad, many of our social reformers do not realize that. How much of effort to restore society terminates on the outside! Ends with externals! Society's millennium seems to end with better sanitation, higher wages, finer homes, more expensive food, and brighter garments—outside things. This is making the baggage of life more important than the man. It is deifying the dust. The Golden Age does not come that way. "The Kingdom of Heaven must work its way out of human souls before ever it can be in the world."

The great passion of our age is for self-expression. There is a revolt against being run in a groove. The demand for freedom from the codes and customs of the ages is made on the ground that these restrain and hinder self-expression. But how often is this hunger for self-expression, not the release of imprisoned splendours

of the soul, but the resurgence of animal passions, hanging over in our bodies, from the life of ape and tiger, before God breathed into us the breath of His life and we became living souls.

We want to express ourselves, therefore let us get drunk; let us go into a far country where "there ain't no Ten Commandments" and we can live riotously. Now if self-expression be all-important, the first question to be asked is, "What have we to express?" "What are we anyway?" "Now are we the sons of God," answers John. If so, our self-expression will be a releasing of the imprisoned splendour of God from out our lives. Now *are* we! What? "Sons of God!" Then let us live like what we *are*! Anything lower is not self-expression but self-abasement.

It is well for us to consider, then, how we may best release our imprisoned splendour. What are some of the forces and influences which enable us to light up the lustre of our lives?

For one thing, there are the circumstances of our every day. Some of them are sad and others of them are glad. Out of gladness and out of sadness alike, may come the glory of our imprisoned splendour. It is quite as much by sorrow and disappointment that the graces of life are won, as by success and happiness. The finest beauty is that of character and sometimes it is the chiselling of pain that completes it.

How often have I seen it! There is a friend of mine, who this morning lies upon her bed, incurably ill. All along the path of her highly useful life, she has been releasing the splendour of the divine. How wonderfully bright, how gloriously luminous is the lustre that her sufferings have lighted. The glow of the eternal shines

with greater brightness upon her face as the flicker of the earthly light burns low. It is all the product of a faith long held, that life is a means of releasing the splendour of God.

Think how responsibility will call forth the highest beauty. How often we say of a young man, "I did not know he had it in him." No! There had been nothing to draw it out. But love led him to the responsibility of a home; there was a duty to loved ones; he was chosen to a public service; he was confronted with a private obligation, and he rose to meet it. And under responsibility, there were released reserves of power he never knew he possessed.

Some years ago Woodrow Wilson stood beside the cabin where Lincoln was born, now enclosed in a marble shrine, and he said:

"This little hut was the cradle of one of the greatest of the sons of men; a man of singular, delightful, vital genius, who presently emerged upon the stage of the nation's history, gaunt, shy, ungainly, but dominant and majestic, a natural ruler of men; himself inevitably the central figure of the great plot. No man can explain this. . . . Here the end and consummation of that great life seem incredible and remote. . . . But Lincoln, like the rest of us, was put through the discipline of the world—a rough and exacting discipline for him. Yet it was the schooling whereby were transmuted into life the treasures of what he was."²

Lincoln displayed few signs of future greatness in early days. Out there on the Illinois prairies he was a diamond

² Woodrow Wilson, at the Dedication of the Lincoln Memorial, newspaper report.

in the rough, fond of telling stories; delighted by boisterous sports, careless and carefree. Then almost by accident he was elevated into the seats of the mighty, and there awoke in him an awful sense of responsibility. He gave it utterance in his speeches, but its fullest expression came in the life he lived. Five years in the White House and the lustre of Lincoln's life was lighted up. It had been there all the while. It was when the responsibility of a nation torn asunder fell upon him, that he was driven to his knees, and the divine splendour came forth. Edwin Markham's picture brings the vivid glory of it all before us:

*" The colour of the ground was in him, the red earth,
The smack and tang of elemental things;
The rectitude and patience of the cliff,
The good-will of the rain that loves all leaves,
The friendly welcome of the wayside well,
The courage of the bird that dares the sea,
The gladness of the wind that shakes the corn,
The pity of the snow that hides all scars,
The tolerance and equity of light
That gives as freely to the shrinking flower
As to the great oak flaring to the wind—
To the grave's low hill as to the Matterhorn
That shoulders out the sky " . . .³*

Circumstances of both sadness and gladness called forth from this great life its imprisoned splendour and released it, and so may it do for you and me.

Then, there are our friends. The greatest dynamic of life is devotion to a person. There is no splendour like that which love evokes. In one of the songs in "The Princess," Tennyson tells of a warrior-knight defending his fireside. The battle is about to begin:

³ Edwin Markham, "Lincoln," in "Lincoln the Man of the People."

*" A moment, while the trumpets blow,
He sees his brood about thy knee;
The next, like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee."*

Love calls courage up out of the depths. What faith we are wont to feel in ourselves when some word of love is spoken by one our heart holds dear. What restraints have been put upon us in the hour of great temptation by the simple question rising, "What would *she* think, if she knew this?" "What if *he* knew?" His is a shining achievement, who can sing:

*" Because of you I bear aloft the standard
Of high resolve; of ideals pure and true
And to ignoble thoughts I have not pandered,
Because of you."*

"Love lights the suns," writes Dante; who tells us that but for his love for Beatrice, he never could have written the *Divina Commedia*, which is alike the wonder and the warning of the ages. Mrs. Browning in her "Sonnets From the Portuguese," tells how love came to turn death into life:

*" ' Guess now who holds thee? '
' Death,' I said. And then the silver answer rang
' Not death but LOVE.' "*

Love of country, love of a cause, love of an ideal, love of a person, will release ten thousand shining wonders of the soul. "Faith, hope, love; but the greatest of these is love."

Another source of release for the imprisoned splendour is ambition. I am not thinking of selfish ambition, "which doth o'erleap itself and fall upon the other side," such as Macbeth had. Perhaps *aspiration* better ex-

presses what I mean—that which lifts and holds life to a high universe of desire, what the poet called “hitching your wagon to a star.”

Never fear for that person who has a high ambition. It does not matter in what field it may be. It will light up his life. The gravest mistake an educator, a parent, a teacher, or a preacher, can make is to suppress ambition in a child, just because it is far afield from his *own* hopes and dreams. Out of that ambition is sure to come the noblest that lies hidden in the heart. That was Jesus' way with men. He was not trying to run all those who followed Him into a common groove of His choosing. Simon was a fisherman; something about the thrill and uncertainty of a fisherman's life appealed to him. Jesus said: “I want a fisherman in my company. Come on, Simon. Henceforth you will be a fisher of men.” He took Peter's nervous, impetuous, honest make-up, so common in a true sportsman, and He called forth from that ambitious disciple all the wonders of his great, radiant after life.

Stevenson in his story, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, has pictured us with a dual personality. There are two of us within—Dr. Jekyll, the noble, pure, loving servant of mankind; and the foul, selfish, murderous Mr. Hyde. Within each of us there is going on a struggle between these two for the ascendancy—the devilish and the divine. Side by side are tiger madness and angelic aspiration. To hold to the field of the attention the achievement of the angelic, will bring forth the splendour that lies hidden. Dr. Jekyll will triumph over Mr. Hyde. The ideals we love, the ambitions we hold, the aspirations we cherish deep down in the hidden caverns of the soul, are they which dim or light the lustre of our lives. That

is why Paul says, "Set your affection on things above." Elevate the universe of your desire. "Out of the heart are the issues of life." "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." What he aspires to be, he will be.

But beyond and above all else is a sense of God and of fellowship with Him. To believe that God IS, to have a feeling that He is here upon the side of the right, to resolve to follow His way in the companionship of Jesus, is the ultimate means of releasing imprisoned splendour. It has been the miracle of history how those who have walked with God, and have seen His Face mirrored in the face of Jesus, have been transformed into the same likeness. He is "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

There was great darkness in the earth when the star of Bethlehem first shed its silver radiance over the hills of Judæa. There were moral night, and social chaos, and religious despair. But Bethlehem's star was a morning star. "The world rolled out of night, and it was day-break everywhere." There was new freshness, new radiance. How did it happen? Jesus had come from God to walk with men. He was to call forth out of their souls the radiance that had been hidden beneath their vices, their doubts, their materialism, their passion. They became radiant, and in their turn shone as lights of the world.

What He did then, He is forever doing—doing now. When He comes, He draws out the imprisoned splendour from the chambers of the soul, until we become glowing lights. That is the meaning of the old word "conversion." It is a turning to Him, whose touch causes the life to glow with new light and new life. All things become new. In John Masfield's "Everlasting Mercy,"

Saul Kane the village wastrel is touched by Christ and he is singing:

*"The station brook, to my new eyes,
Was babbling out of Paradise,
The waters rushing in the rain
Were singing Christ has risen again.
I thought all earthly creatures knelt
From rapture of the joy I felt.*

* * * * *

*I knew that Christ had given me birth
To brother all the souls on earth,
And every bird and every beast
Should share the crumbs broke at the feast."*⁴

That has been the experience of millions down the centuries. Than it there is nothing more powerful to call forth the imprisoned splendour: "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Within us all lie undreamed-of possibilities, waiting for some touch to bring them forth. We do not live up to a tenth of our divine destiny. "A man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?" The unlimited education of eternity lies before us. "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." There is "*mehr voran*," as the dying Goethe cried.

At the close of a long life Victor Hugo wrote: "For half a century I have been writing my thoughts in prose and in verse, in history, drama, philosophy, romance, tradition, satire, ode and song. But I have not said a thousandth part of all that is in me." We all are sky-born children. "All God's chillun' got wings." There is something of Cyrano De Bergerac in us all, saying:

⁴ *Poems by John Masefield*, p. 118 (Macmillan).

*“ The ether clings to me. I’ve travelled far.
My eyes are filled with star dust. On my spurs
I still have shreds torn from a comet’s hide!
See, on my doublet, there’s a comet’s hair! ”*

We belong to worlds far out beyond our bourne of time and place. Then let us make the most of these flying years that we may draw up from the deeps within, the flashing splendour that is ours as sons of God. Let knowledge grow from more to more but more of reverence in us dwell.

*“ So shall it be that when I stand
On that next planet’s ruddy shimmering strand,
I shall not seem a pert and forward child,
Seeking to dabble in abstruser lore,
With alphabet unlearned, who in disgrace
Returns upon his primer yet to pore.
But those examiners, all-wise and mild,
Will gently lead me to my place,
As one who faithfully did trace,
These simpler earthly lessons o’er and o’er.”*⁵

⁵ Edward Rowland Sill, “ The Hermitage ” (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.).

XIII

THE REDEEMING REMNANT

"And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples as dew from Jehovah, as showers upon the grass."

—MICAH 5: 7.

THROUGH the writings of the major prophets of Israel there runs a constant theme. In passages of exalted vision and exuberant beauty their hope for the Tomorrow of their people is expressed in the thought of a Redeeming Remnant. This is the great burden of the Book of Isaiah from the fortieth chapter onward. This part of Isaiah is most certainly from another pen and another age than that of the first part, which was the work of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, in the twilight years before the fall of Jerusalem.

Now the captivity in Babylon is about to end. The Exile is over, and the Voice is one of return, recovery, and repatriation. It abounds in glowing pictures of the Golden Age. The race that has been despised and rejected of men is to return to Zion with songs and everlasting joy, and there in the land of the fathers they will make an immortal contribution to the uplift of mankind.

But not the whole race. At first there seems to be the thought that the whole people will be the redeeming remnant in the earth. But the prophet remembers how many of his people have settled down there in Babylon in the prosperous ways of the pagan capital, and can be counted no more among the true Israelites. Surely these

cannot be reckoned with for any saving mission. The real servant of Jehovah—which is his phrase to describe the redeeming remnant—will be a much smaller body—a loyal kernel within the whole, still conscious of a national calling, still sensible of a duty to the whole world; a handful of corn upon the mountainside from which will spring the harvest of a new world.

Then his vision reaches onward through the centuries and he sees the remnant finally consummated and crowned in a great and single personality, who would crown His Saviourhood with a redeeming martyrdom, that would finally take away the sins and accompanying sorrows of humanity, and bring the race into a new fellowship with the divine. The pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand. He will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. The travail will bring forth a new humanity. This idea of a redeeming remnant is not merely the fanciful dream of an ecstatic prophet. It is one of the actualities of history. Every gain humanity has made has been achieved by a brave, far-seeing, devoted, long suffering minority. Daring to think and live ahead of their time, they appear to their contemporaries to be wicked heretics, dangerous radicals, damnable demagogues, enemies of society. Yet the very names heaped upon them in derision have become in time names to conjure with. They have become a redeeming remnant of whom their age was not worthy.

No need to enlarge upon this truth. It appears on every page of history. At the very dawn of history an ancient leader was pleading with the Judge of all the earth, that He save Sodom from the finality of its iniquities. He said to Abram that He would deliver the city if fifty righteous men could be found therein. The peti-

tioner, realizing that good men were scarce in Sodom, asked that the requirements be reduced to forty, then thirty, then twenty, and finally he brought the figure down to ten. The Judge assured him that if ten good men could be found in the place He would spare it. But they could not be found. Ten righteous men will save *any* city. The world is redeemed not by its majorities, but by its righteous minorities.

We forget that in these days. We think the majority must be right, because in our democracy we have given it supreme authority. We say, "The Voice of the people is the voice of God." The fact is, the majority is almost certain to be wrong on any matter of fine taste or sound judgment; and in spite of all provisions to the contrary it does NOT rule.

The idea of representative government in the minds of our fathers was that a majority of the people should pick the finest man in their community to represent them in Congress. He would go unfettered to the capital and make his decisions and cast his vote, according to what his instructed mind and his enlightened conscience told him was right. Has it worked out that way, think you? Not at all! A congressman goes to Washington in almost every instance pledged to work the will of some resolute, militant, organized, compact minority. If not before his election, at least afterward, he will be flooded with telegrams by thousands from self-seeking interests, who threaten him with loss of his office, if he does not work the will of this minority or that. There are all sorts of minorities, good, bad, and indifferent. Every foolish fad, and every selfish program of our times we know is backed by a minority. Uninformed, irresponsible, violent minorities are the peril of democracy. A man is not right

just because he belongs to a minority party. Our present Congress is a striking example of how minorities rule in America. It would not be so bad if the motive behind these minorities were the common good of all. But usually they are concerned with some special privilege or concession or exemption for their own class, at the expense of the rest of society. Could we be assured that the ruling minority were true aristocrats, in the highest sense of the word—the best men—there would be no cause for worry, but the fact remains that minorities, good or bad, govern the earth. The prophets were right. "When earth goes back to her lost youth and life grows deep and wonderful as truth," it will be through the saving power of a righteous remnant.

Over our own land Isaiah might well exclaim: "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that deal corruptly." Yet he could add: "Except Jehovah had left to us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom." Now, the fate of our nation, the hope of the world is, that there shall be found within it a redeeming remnant TODAY. In the Roman world of two thousand years ago there was such a remnant. Our era began under the impulse of a minority that had saving power. There was a "suffering servant" of Jehovah in that hour, who gloriously fulfilled the vision of the prophet. He came among men clothed in the garments of righteousness Isaiah had foreseen. But when men saw Him, He did not have the form or comeliness that made them desire Him. They crucified Him! But He left behind a little band who had caught His spirit. He had said to them: "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." It was so! They became a little measure of leaven hid

in the meal of human life, and they worked until the whole was leavened.

Time and again it has happened in history since then. Is it going to happen in our day? Is there a saving remnant now, in all this modern mess that George Bernard Shaw describes as "the barbarism, savagery, dark ages and all the rest of it"? Where shall we look for it? "The Church ought to be that saving remnant," says someone. RIGHT! But is it? Are the church people a group of forward looking men and women, on whom has fallen the vision of a world order that will remake society and create a nobler life for men and women? Are we a company like the disciples of the first century, ready to sacrifice fame and fortune and life itself for those ideas and ideals which are for the healing of the nations? The future of the race is in the hands of SOME minority. Is it the Hitler crowd, with their race religion and hatreds; is it Mussolini, with his cruel unchristian ambitious dream of power; is it some American party, or bloc, or corporation trying to harness the government to its own selfish uses; or is it a company of Christians boldly standing for peace, and justice and goodwill, and righteousness, as Christ and His disciples stood and battled?

The other day I read the statistics of the churches for the past year. They have shown remarkable growth in numbers. But how about their redeeming power? The fact is the Church in America is a majority institution, and it is moved by majority desires and decisions. The only hope is that within it, as in Israel, shall be found a redeeming remnant that will not bow the knee to Baal, nor rest from mortal strife, till they have built Jerusalem in this fair and happy land.

Can we look to the business world as a redeeming remnant? I know the difficulties business men face today. Too much is expected of them. The great hope of all peoples seems to be wrapped up in business recovery. That word "recovery" is on every tongue. What do men mean by it? They mean business recovery. They mean increased production, increased profits, increased wages. They mean economic betterment. The whole nation is busy playing the game of business recovery.

Will the business leaders be able to save the world any more than the Church? Not at all. I listen to them as they talk. I sit beside them at luncheon clubs. They are my choicest friends. I respect and honour them. They say, that if men would only play the game according to the rules, everything would be well and good. Many of them are doing that. But for most of them it has never dawned that we are entering a day when the old rules no longer suffice. A great change has come into human life, and we are faced with more than a New Deal—we are confronted with a new game, and a new set of rules. Competition is no longer the life of trade. It is the death of it. The old law of the jungle, which has long prevailed in trade, is being replaced by the law of love. We shall have to learn co-operation, and put selfish competition forever behind us. The old business game and the old business laws are dead.

In the days before the Civil War there were many slaveholders who were kind to their slaves. They were honourable men who played the game according to their light. But the game was wrong. No man has a right to enslave his brother. Economic ruin awaits a civilization that tries it.

A like situation confronts industry today. For long

years the men who furnish the money for business have dominated it. The workers have not been submissive under the reign of capital. Against the dollars of the capitalist they are putting the hazard of their lives. They want to share in the management of their company. They will not be content with a bonus handed them with however fine grace. They want to share the vital life of the business and have a voice in its policies. But that means a new game and new rules. It means the democratizing of business. And I think our economic salvation awaits a redeeming remnant among business men, who have the vision to see it and to follow. Business never will be saved by politicians, nor by its own self-satisfied Pharisees standing in the temple, thanking God that they are not as other men. Business will be saved by that remnant within itself, from labourer and executive alike, that has courage to make business a game where justice and brotherly love, and co-operative service, work together to give humanity a Really New Deal.

By such a process also we enter into moral and spiritual restoration. That was the lament of the prophets of Israel. Their people had forsaken God and His way of life. Moral corruption had engulfed society. The masses of men were living loosely, caught in the welter of heathen voices all around them. Read the prophets thoughtfully and you will discover there a catalogue of vices, comparable to what Juvenal and Terence wrote about the later Roman days. They are the moral evils of every age that discards time-proof standards, releases the brakes and plunges downhill upon a wild joy-ride of self-indulgence. I do not have time to enumerate them. They are here with us today. If anybody has any idea that we have anything new in naughtiness, let him read

the prophets. It is the same old stuff that ravaged the yesterdays.

How shall we be saved from its inevitable death? Here too by a redeeming remnant that has courage to stand forth and say: "No, this thing is wrong. I will not do it. How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

Not many people will *do* that. They will do what the crowd does. It is surprising too, in this day when men want so to be self-expressing individualists. They will follow the lock-step of the mob, and let their conduct become as standardized as a college entrance examination. There is no hope for a higher morality from moral marionettes, whose excuse for low living is: "Everybody's doing it now."

The hope of the world is in a saving remnant of moral individualists, who dare to be Daniels, who dare to stand alone, who dare to cling to sanctities that time and experience have proven to be good and true and beautiful, and at the same time venture into new and daring exploits of battle.

This question comes home to every youth. "Will I belong to the saving remnant of society? In my church am I one who really is standing by Christ and His way of life, or do I belong to that great mass of people who bear the name of Christian, who carry Christ's name and sign, but who live like pagans, and have no part in Christ's purity or His saving mission. In my business ideals and practices am I one of the crowd of self-satisfied, self-seeking money-getters, or do I belong to the saving few who are trying to create in man's economic relationships a larger justice and loftier goodwill. Is my personal morality at the command of the crowd,

my 'resolution sicklied o'er with a pale cast of thought' for what people will say, or am I taking a stand for righteousness that will make me one of the moral pioneers of the Age of Gold?"

I tell you there are no other questions so vital as these. A new day hangs on your answer to them. My challenge is above all to you who are Christians. The first name given to the Church was "ecclesia." We get our word "ecclesiastical" from it. It means "called out"—a little minority selected from the majority to be leaven for the whole lump. "Not many mighty, not many noble," was the way Paul described it. Just a little company, in the world—"a colony of heaven"—set down to reproduce the life, to exemplify the ideals, and to sow the seed of the mother city beyond the stars. Is *your* citizenship in heavenly places? If it is, you will belong to a small company, a minority group, living, struggling, fighting spiritually, against the apparently superior odds of a pagan civilization—but withal its one hope of life.

It is not easy to be in a minority—to belong to the redeeming remnant. It is hard! It means a fight. But life begins for all of us in its fullest sense, when we get into some kind of a fight. We are never worth much when "in the lap of sensual ease we forego the godlike power to be and the godlike aim to know." We do not need war to bring out the virtues of a soldier. Soldiers of Christ achieve them in the spiritual warfare that comes from belonging to the redeeming remnant, on whom the future of the world depends.

In the preface to George Bernard Shaw's play, *Too True To Be Good*, there is a dialogue between Pilate and Jesus. Jesus says to Pilate: "The empire that looks backward with fear must give way to the Kingdom that

looks forward with hope." That is the issue in our modern world. The majority is of the empire that looks backward with fear. The kingdom that looks forward with hope is made up of a small but creative minority, who are strong enough to endure as seeing the invisible.

The choice confronts us. We are called on here and now to live a clear-cut Christian life, with all the odds, so far as numbers go, against us, ten to one. What of it! The very difficulty of it is a challenge to our best powers of mind and heart. Why not stand with the redeeming remnant in this community! Why not link our lives to His, Who is able, in spite of the odds, to bring us off the field more than conquerors? So shall we have a share in bringing our people into the promised land. So shall it be said of each of us:

*"One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would
triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."*

XIV

THE HANDWRITING OF EVENTS

“**C**OMING events cast their shadows before.” Current events leave their handwriting on the wall. Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, found it so. His father, Nebuchadnezzar, had been an able and ruthless pioneer in kingdom building. In an inscription unearthed from the ruins of Babylon, some years ago, he boasts that he has conquered the whole world, that he has gathered captives and treasure from all peoples. He calls himself “the eagle.” From his lofty eminence of grandeur he surveyed the world beneath his feet.

His son, after him, went the pace. Basking in prosperity and power, he gave himself over to spendthrift luxury in his capital, and proceeded to wreck his kingdom with riotous living. Oblivious to the necessity of defending his frontiers, and rejecting the righteousness that exalts a nation, his mighty empire went to pieces before the onslaught of enemies from without and vices within.

Now he is giving a great banquet in the palace to which he has invited a thousand of the “big bugs” of Babylon. The courtiers and the concubines fawn upon him, and tell him what a grand fellow he is. Like all fools, he mistakes flattery for friendship. To please the whims of his courtesans he brings out “the golden and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem,” and they all drank wine from

them and praised "the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone." To their sensuality they added the sin of sacrilege.

Then in the midst of their revels, and born of their "heat-disordered brains," they suddenly see upon the palace wall above the candlesticks, the fingers of a man's hand writing four fateful words, "WEIGHED, WEIGHED, NUMBERED, DIVIDED."

Stark terror seizes the king; his countenance pales; his knees knock together; "his thoughts trouble him." Well they may. For outside the city walls a general of the Medes and Persians has just succeeded in turning aside the course of a river flowing through the city, and underneath the wall, along the channel of the now-dry river bed, he is pouring in his troops to conquer and sack the city. It is written, "that night—that very night—was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain." A belated penitence, which was nothing more than fear, did not save Belshazzar and the thousands of his lords.

*"The moving finger writes, and having writ
Moves on: nor all your piety nor wit
Can lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it."*

Events leave their handwriting on the wall. Their inward meaning is set forth by a moving finger, and whether they write destiny or doom, the letters they trace on *every* palace wall in *any* Babylon, are fateful words. For they are written by the finger of God, the Judge of all the earth. "God argues with events." The handwriting of events is very real. Marshall Dawson in his book *Nineteenth Century Evolution and After* writes:

"Twentieth century biology has a morality which puts Calvinism to shade. Jonathan Edwards in his famous sermon 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,' pictured the penitent suspended by a thread over a burning pit. Twentieth century biology paints a more impressive picture. It points to the animal depths from which we have climbed up, and to which reversion is frightfully easy. In place of the slender thread, it shows us a strong elastic band, by which man still is linked to the animal world from which he has struggled up; and if he ceases to strive and to struggle, he may be snapped back into the abyss of animalism."¹

The pull of the ape and tiger is on us all, and when that pull is yielded to, the very events of our lives write their words before our eyes, and a voice interprets them: "Thou hast not humbled thy heart. Thou hast lifted up thyself against the God of heaven. Thou hast profaned that which is holy—THEREFORE thou art weighed, found wanting, numbered, and divided."

I wonder what are the words the events of our times are writing! Let a few of them pass in pageantry before us.

Amid the peaceful beauty of the Versailles Palace, outside Paris, is gathered a group representing the great powers of the earth. They have just finished a bloody war costing ten million lives, and hundreds of billions of wealth. They are here to treat of peace and justice. A great idealist is there, whose words have captured the imaginations of men as he talked of liberty, of larger life for all peoples, and of peace born of equity and of brotherhood. But the elastic band is pulling back toward the jungle, and these alleged peacemakers are sowing

¹ M. Dawson, *Nineteenth Century Evolution and After* (Macmillan).

the seeds of tyranny, of hatred, of economic disaster, of warfare. Under the pressure of it, and under the threat of the politicians of his own land, the idealist yields, broken-hearted. The nations slip back to the jungle. The years roll by. The dragon's-teeth become armed men, now. There is revolution and battle everywhere in the air. Tyrants snuff out human liberty. Hatred and strife vex the earth. The four horsemen of the apocalypse ride ruthlessly through the nations.

Eighteen years have passed away and a little black man, once the king of the oldest Christian nation of the world, is standing before a League of the Nations, pleading for a righting of the ruin that has befallen his people at the hand of one of those very nations. He says:

"It is my duty to inform the governments here assembled of the deadly peril that threatens them by describing to them the fate that has been suffered by Ethiopia. It is not upon warriors alone that the Italian government has made war. It has attacked populations far removed from the hostilities to terrorize and exterminate them. Sprayers of poison from the air have drenched soldiers, women, children, cattle, rivers, lakes, pastures, with a deadly rain. These fearful tactics succeeded. Men and animals died. The deadly rain falling from airplanes made all those whom it touched to fly shrieking with pain. All those who drank poisoned water or ate infected food died in dreadful suffering. Are the states going to set up a terrible precedent by bowing before such force? It is international morality which is at stake. What reply have I to take back to my people?"²

What reply *did* he have? Idle generalities about justice and peace and goodwill, and jeers from the aggressor

² Haillie Sellasie, Speech at League of Nations (Newspaper Report).

nation, and nothing but "words, words, words." As he sits down, he exclaims, "God and history will remember." *They will!* The event will write its word against the selfish nationalism that despises the moral principles by which nations live, and violates and ignores those very principles which have given our civilization its name—Christendom.

A second event from the pageant of life.

It is Saturday night in a roadhouse just outside the limits of any American city. A few less than a hundred young men and women are crowding the place almost to suffocation. The air reeks with the odour of beer. The talk is cheap, even salacious. The crowded condition makes impossible whatever artistry there may be in the dance. Money is being spent thoughtlessly and no account is taken of time. The whole atmosphere is low, loud, and lewd. These young people are going to hell as fast as commercialized liquor and cheap amusement can make them go. In the wee small hours there will be a wrecked car somewhere on the highway; there will be broken heads and broken hearts and a new spread of that most prevalent and most dreadful disease that racks human bodies. They who escape for the moment these deadlier perils will go to work next morning with tired bodies and befogged minds. Every one of them will feel the deadening of all those cultural and spiritual qualities that belong to the True, the Good, and the Beautiful. Do I speak too strongly when I say these souls are on the highway to hell?

How has it happened? I am not blaming these young people. Their high-beating hearts are entitled to hit the high spots of life. And this is the kind of thrill their adult society has provided for them. A few years ago

in a fever of righteousness the nation passed laws banning such places. Then the righteous sat back and rested on their legal achievement, doing nothing. Meanwhile the forces of greed, wiser in their generation than the children of light, began a secret assault on the youth. Inch by inch they advanced until finally under promise that "repeal" would result in balancing the national budget, end bootlegging and all other lawless and demoralizing activities of the liquor business, including the permanent banishing of the saloon—a President and an administration came to power pledged to "repeal." It kept *that* pledge.

But every fair promise made for control, by which many fine people were deceived, was at once ignored. The day after the election the "Crusaders" folded their tents and stole away. The crusade ended in the road house. Now organized greed is free to work its ruin almost without surveillance, certainly without control. Most of the people are sitting idly by doing nothing, while the sons and daughters of tomorrow pass into moral and spiritual night. Why is it so? Oh, some of us want our own drinks easily accessible, some of us are blind to the havoc of the event, others morally too lazy to care. But the event writes its record on our times. "Weighed, Weighed, Numbered, Divided." Again, the elastic band pulling an effortless people back into the jungle.

The scene shifts to a slum district of a city. Here, crowded in dark and narrow hovels, hot in summer and cold in winter, half-starved, half-clothed, are millions of civilization's finished products. They have come from the wide open spaces of other lands, to this land of promised freedom. They have fallen prey to selfish

forces of our capitalistic civilization. Here in their crowded tenements, they labour long hours at piecework for which they receive a pitiful wage. Their greedy landlords press them continually for all the rent the traffic will bear. Periodically, their men return from a ceaseless but useless search for work in an industrial system that seems completely to have broken down. Occasionally they will gather in great mobs on the streets with banners and voices, loudly denouncing things as they are, and calling for a revolution that shall enthrone the false and futile promises of communism. If they are quite close to some great industry calling for cheap labour, like as not the children of these people, from five to fifteen, will be found working in a factory, instead of studying in school or playing in the parks. Occasionally before some great industrial plant you will see crowds of these toilers on strike, and snarling at their employers, who snarl back with equal hatred. All this because we are in a selfish system of economic chaos and inequity, becoming more acute every day, and threatening to wreck our civilization and to destroy all hope of any Golden Age on earth.

At the same time the great political parties are bringing forth from their conventions, platforms and promises, which the great mass of men know from past experiences are alike futile and false. So they accept a dole from their government, and in time come to the belief that it is the business of the government to support the people, reversing the whole idea of democracy that it is the business of the people to support the government. For they have given up hope of social reform through politics. More and more they lean to violent revolution. The mass of them also have given up religion. In the

churches they see well-to-do worshippers singing and preaching ideals of brotherhood and goodwill and loving service; but the mass of them have come to feel that Christians never intend to follow these ideals into practice, and judge them to be largely wishful thinking or plain hypocrisy. So it has come to pass that the selfish social pull of our time steadily draws us back to the jungle, where prevails the law of the survival of the fittest and "he may take who has the power and he may keep who can."

One further event lies before us. Out in a western city is gathered a small company of church people in one of the most beautiful church edifices of America. They have come to perform the final obsequies of their organization. This church has a membership of close to 2,000. Ten years ago they built this beautiful building, and mortgaged its future to meet a large part of its cost. But ten years have wrought a great change in the hearts of the mass of its membership. There was a peak of prosperity, and a depression came. It was generally believed in the years of depression that its hardships would draw men nearer to the Divine, and that, with returning prosperity, there would be a larger dedication to God than ever before. But it has not worked that way. A decade has seen an ever-widening circle of indifference to religion. On this Sunday morning, so fateful, only a handful is present. Where are the rest? They are enjoying luxurious week-ends in the mountains and by the seashore, they are swelling the throngs on the crowded highways, they are at ball games or in the theatres. They have spent their money for rich furnishings in their homes, for automobiles and motor yachts, fine houses, fine clothes, good food and good entertain-

ment. They have gambled away vast sums of it, and have spent much for the kingdoms of this world. The Kingdom of God has received their small change. That scene is becoming a common one. It was the first time in the religious history of the nation that a church in a growing community and with a substantial clientele had been compelled to close its doors under a mortgage. The need for that edifice was not gone. The people who built it were not poor. They were religiously indifferent. They have everything they want apart from religion. Their wants being in the low train of earthly toys, they have no desire to soar and reach immortal joys. Christianity is no longer a reality in their lives. It is no longer even a formal practice. It is not even a shadow across their path. It is but a memory to these scions of a self-reliant, self-sufficient, pagan society. How rapidly they are increasing, every minister knows.

The goal of their endeavour now is to lay up treasure on the earth, to have great possessions, unlimited pleasure, and to eat, drink, and be merry. Having their treasure in earthen vessels, the events of their life are writing their judgment on the wall. No puritan prophet, but O. O. McIntyre, the New York columnist, writes this word about them:

"Not in my time has the universe been in such a constant fret over material losses and material gains. Of philosophers there have been many, but the world discovers again that the roots of all philosophy go back to Biblical source. Paul sums it up: 'But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we carry nothing hence. Having food and raiment let us therewith be content.'

"The world's rich men generally have found vast wealth only so much excess baggage . . . of course there are the money grubbers who make possessions their god. But almost invariably they are nipped in the disaster that sweeps it away. The great financier, Rothschild the elder, said: 'It requires little ability to make money, but great genius to be content.' How true!"³

Now, these four events of our times—an arrogant militaristic nationalism, working its oppressions; moral decadence, under the stimulus of commercialized amusement and vice; social injustice, issuing in class hatred and warfare; acquisitive passion for *things*, smothering the spiritual and bringing on the defeat of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth—all these are what the Hebrew prophets call the sins of civilization. It was events like these that wrote their warning on the walls of Babylon. They wrote it on the walls of Jerusalem. They are writing it now. No glare of wealth, no fulsome patriotism, no peace of formal ritual, no self-confident optimism, can hide the moving finger as it writes the meaning of these events. Militaristic nationalism, the seduction of the innocent to personal impurity, the pressure of powerful classes on the weak, the evils of luxury, the crime of injustice, and the attitude of religious indifference—these are the sins of enlightened and civilized people, and they are worse than the atrocities of barbarism, and are as certain of divine judgment.

No thoughtful man among us can look out upon the events around him and not seriously ask, "How much of this deserves the judgment of God? How much must be overthrown before His will can be done? How much of

³ O. O. McIntyre, "New York Day by Day."

our wealth, our culture, our politics, indeed how much of the whole fabric of our society is fit to endure? "

The handwriting of events cannot be hid. When we see the jealousies of Christian nations, their preparations for war, our own national expenditures for armaments and for war maneuvers; when we think of all this racial and class and religious hatred now being fostered on the earth; when we see life continuing to be so hard for the poor; when we see the forces of greed blasting innocence and lifting prurience to the level of an art, and making licentiousness a cult; when we think of the vast indifference of men to the high and holy words that proceed out of the mouth of God, we wonder how far judgment can be away. If it be boasted that we have Christianity to save us, which those nations of antiquity did not have, let us remember that God does justice at whatever cost, that never has He spared a favoured people because of any sacred oracles they happened to hold. Religion is not an escape. It is an opportunity. The dust that lies on Nineveh and Tyre may yet lie upon our civilization. "I will make a visitation upon the men who are become stagnant upon their lees, who say in their hearts Jehovah will do us good and not evil," cries Zephaniah. The figure is of a cup of wine where the lees (the dregs) have settled to the bottom of a glass. Soon the wine at the top grows thick and spoils. It is the figure of a society gone stale and stagnant and beginning to decay. Have we settled so long on our lees that we are beginning to spoil? Many a people has done that. Here, as in Israel, there is the criminal apathy of well-to-do people sunk in ease and religious indifference. Here is a great mass of nameless, obscure persons of the middle class, who pathetically reach out hands toward the State for

food and drink and amusement; here are the great causes of God and humanity languishing, not from the assaults of enemies but from the indifference of friends, destroyed not by being blown up but by being smothered. Here is respectability grown putrescent in calm desuetude on the top of the heap, while hairy, red-shirted anarchy boils and ferments beneath. The denouement of such a situation is written large on the very event, "Weighed, Weighed, Numbered, Divided."

What shame should fall upon us prophets and disciples of the Lord, who go on preaching thin moralizing and worn platitudes, praising the hollow professions of our luncheon clubs, our lodges, and our churches, professing to believe in Christ's high ideals and yet doing them not. It is time for us all, in great sorrow and humbleness of heart, to bow ourselves in the dust before our God, and cry for His mercy and His forgiveness, then rising to "try His works to do" in a world gone wrong.

There is one event that is timeless—it is that of the Man on His cross. It rises on the landscape of life today, not merely as a refuge, but as a challenge. The hand of that event moves across the walls of our banquetings, writing the words, "Except, except—ye take up—this cross, ye cannot be my disciples." "Every soul and every social order that heareth these words of mine and doeth them *not*, I will liken him to a fool that built his house upon the sand." The hard tests came and it fell and great was the fall thereof.

"*That* night" was the King of the Chaldeans slain. "*This* night, thy soul is required of thee." God cometh as a refiner's fire and in His day of judgment who shall stand?

Great God, our Father, Thou art very patient with us, recreant children of Thine. We are very sinful, and we dwell in a generation of thoughtless self-sufficiency and arrogant pride. Our lives are motived and our programs planned to self-advantage and with no thought of Thee and Thy requirements. Our hearts are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. We lay before Thee the sins of our society, of our nation, of ourselves. Forgive us, our Father, cleanse us, restore us, give us changed minds, renew a right spirit within us. Give us only that which will make us clean and Christlike.

*“ For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube or iron shard;
All valiant dust that builds on dust
And guarding calls not thee to guard;
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy mercy on Thy people, Lord! ”*

